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MILTON'S IMAGINATION: AUDITORY OR VISUAL?

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Milton's Imagination: Auditory or Visual?, submitted by William Lander in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to define the nature of Milton's imagination, with special emphasis on the form and content of Paradise Lost. Although it deals with the poet's concentration on sound as the most prominent feature of the style of Paradise Lost, it seeks to show that there is room for modification in the modern view that a heavy emphasis on sound and an absence of particularized visual images must lead to a "dissociation of sensibility" in poetry. More importantly, Milton's style is defended as one which was appropriate for the kind of epic poem he was writing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.	1
I MILTON'S VISUAL IMAGINATION	19
II MILTON'S AUDITORY IMAGINATION--PART I	43
III MILTON'S AUDITORY IMAGINATION--PART II	60
CONCLUSION.	84
FOOTNOTES	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	101

INTRODUCTION

In a brilliant and influential essay written in 1939, T. S. Eliot made a number of perceptive comments which have raised some interesting problems connected with the nature of Milton's imagination and his poetry as a whole. Eliot says that Milton's imagination is auditory rather than visual. In his view, a vague, conventional language where combinations of words do not "enlarge the meaning of . . . individual words joined," is by nature antagonistic to the development of images which "convey the feeling of being in a particular place at a particular time." Because he associates particularity with visual clarity, he does not feel that Milton's poetry has anything for the eye. Eliot goes on to say that the syntax of Paradise Lost "is determined by the musical significance, by the auditory imagination, rather than by the attempt to follow actual speech or thought."¹ This leads him to the conclusion that there is a "dissociation of sensibility"² in Milton's poetry, a separation of the meaning of the poem from its surface. He is prepared to concede that thought (a theology he finds "repellant") is present in Paradise Lost, but feels that it has been bodied forth in a vague, generalized form of imagery and suppressed by too much emphasis on "verbal music." Shakespeare's thought does not elude Eliot with the same persistence as does Milton's because "the auditory imagination and the imagination

of the other senses are more nearly fused, and fused together with the thought."³

Eliot gives a number of reasons why this "dissociation of sensibility" is characteristic of Milton's poetry. He sees blindness as the most important cause because it strengthened Milton's natural preference for seeing things in terms of generalized forms by forcing him into an interior world where his recollections of visual phenomena were indistinct. Blindness also intensified the poet's auditory imagination because he had to compensate for his visual deficiencies by sharpening his other senses. Theodore Banks lays similar stress on the importance of Milton's blindness. In his discussion of Milton's imagery taken from nature he says that the poet never uses "delicate descriptive detail," and he attributes this to weak eyesight. He goes on to point out that the poet's blindness is accompanied by a growing awareness of the sounds of nature. However, Banks does not take Eliot's final stand: because he does not associate visual imagery with particularity, he is prepared to say that even after blindness Milton's "images remained prevaillingly visual."⁴

Although the blindness theory has some value, it should not be taken as the last word on the Milton controversy. E. M. W. Tillyard, who disagrees with Eliot's assertion that particularized visual images are never conspicuous in Milton's poetry, has exploded the blindness theory by arguing that the poet could particularize

after he lost his vision. "Nothing could be more rigidly and concentratedly particularized," he says, "than parts of Samson."⁵

Eliot is perhaps right in saying that blindness helped Milton "to concentrate on what he could do best," but in the final analysis the poet's use of generalized imagery has to be attributed to something else.

Eliot gives as another reason for Milton's habit of generalizing the emphasis placed on "book-learning" in the poet's youth, an emphasis which led to a withering of the senses. This bookish influence has been recognized by other critics. Banks, who devotes one chapter of his study to an investigation of the influence of books on Milton's imagery, thinks that there were some occasions where the poet preferred to draw upon material from books rather than upon his own experiences. S. A. Nock argues that Milton's use of colours "shows a curious and perverse attachment to his books!"⁶ However, like the blindness theory, this influence of books has been overstressed by critics. Almost every great artist draws heavily upon the material of his predecessors--something very true of Eliot himself--and it seems rather far-fetched to associate this with a generalizing habit of mind.

Finally, Eliot sees Milton's musical training as a factor of considerable importance in the development of his imagination, because it led him to arrange words for their emotive rather than for their intellectual significance. Yet, even though it is true that music

2. exerted a strong influence on the period structure of Milton's verse, this argument is not totally convincing because it is the product of a rather biased attitude to the nature of poetic language. Eliot, unfortunately, associates the meaning of a poem with "actual speech or thought"; in other words, he seems to think that colloquial speech is the norm which all poets should follow if they wish to communicate their ideas to the reader. Because he associates the "straightforward utterance" with meaning and particularized imagery with visual clarity, he is bound to see a "dissociation of sensibility" in Milton's poetry.

After Eliot wrote his first essay other critics attacked Milton with an intensified fervour and even began to doubt his position as a great English poet (a stand which Eliot himself was never prepared to take). Sir Herbert Read took a position somewhere between Eliot and the extremists. He saw a fundamental dualism in Milton's poetry, a split between "the thought to be expounded" and "the poetic mould into which his thought had to be smelted," yet he was rather hesitant in taking sides because he was not sure whether this "defect" was in itself enough to diminish the poet's greatness.⁷ F. R. Leavis, on the other hand, took an extreme position because he could find almost nothing of merit in the poet's verse: Milton's un-English syntax disturbed him because he felt it was responsible for an unfortunate absence of "delicate life" in Paradise Lost and in the poems written later.⁸

In his second essay on Milton, Eliot retracted some of the statements he had made earlier.⁹ After eleven years, he was prepared to modify his criticism of Milton's generalized imagery and see it not as a weakness but as a "positive virtue." He argued that the poet's description of Paradise and his conception of Adam and Eve could not be particularized because Paradise Lost deals with a theme or setting that is beyond the world of ordinary human experience. Particularization would draw Milton's superhuman forms and idealized landscapes into the realm of the familiar, and this is not where they belong.¹⁰ Furthermore, because the visual element must necessarily be suppressed to suit the particular vision the poet is presenting, Eliot defended the musical qualities of Milton's poetry because "the emphasis is on the sound, not the vision, upon the word, not the idea." Although this defence of Milton is very convincing, it says absolutely nothing about his earlier poems. If we are to take the attitude that generalized imagery is good only if a poet decides to write an epic with a theme remote from experience, we have to question the use of this kind of imagery in a poem like "L'Allegro" where the theme of the poem does not transcend the confined world of everyday experience. Eliot's argument, as it stands, is only half-convincing because it explains a poem which represents only one side of Milton's creative output.

Even after Eliot had modified his position in his second

essay, a multitude of indignant critics came to the defence of Milton. Douglas Bush, in Paradise Lost in Our Time, argues that Milton is an artist in the classical tradition and, like all classical artists, his habit is to render "the normal and universal, not the peculiar." It was the classical artist's job, he says, "to order nature, not merely to reproduce it or leave it half finished" as a poet like Donne would do in "his network of heterogeneous particulars." In his defence of the lines Eliot quotes from "L'Allegro," for example, he says that it would be wrong to particularize in a landscape which is an expression of the "ideal."¹¹ Other critics defend Milton from a similar perspective: Mario Praz sees him as a classical artist who disregards "whatever is curious, picturesque, particular, not universal;"¹² and Tillyard argues that Milton is an example of the type of poet who idealizes, who sees things in terms of his "composite imaginings" rather than his "simple sensuous impressions"--to condemn him for this, he says, is to condemn "a widespread habit of mind."¹³

Roy Daniells and Wylie Sypher represent another group of critics who argue that Milton's poetry reflects the baroque spirit in art. As they see it baroque art is an expression of massive contraries that clash, or of powerful wills in direct opposition to each other, and this is why the figures and landscapes of Milton's epic are presented as generalized forms and spaces divested of any kind of complexity, which would rob them of their significance as polar forces. Furthermore, as Wylie Sypher points out, the baroque

artist "resolves matter in energy."¹⁴ This would explain why Satan, for example, is never clearly defined in visual terms: it is the energy of his will, his "unconquerable mind," that is important to Milton's baroque imagination.

The most impressive defence of Milton's poetry is Isabel MacCaffrey's Paradise Lost as Myth. Because the mythical world is one of contrary forces operating against each other, she sees the poet's emphasis on contrarities as a feature of his myth-making imagination. If this element of separation rather than synthesis of opposites is true of myth, then it would not have been possible for Milton to use combinations of words which would give his imagery a sense of particularity. As Mrs. MacCaffrey points out, "Milton makes his words take sides." She goes on to argue that because the world of myth is outside of time the mythical imagination does not find its material in the time world but sees things in terms of "eternal prototypes."¹⁵ These prototypes are expressed in "spatial form," which is the compression of time into a moment, not a stream of time which runs in a sequence. "The geography of Paradise Lost," she says, "provides a medium in which motion can take place without the awareness of temporal process--duration--that usually accompanies it; . . . this ability to apprehend time as a completed pattern gives it immediately a spatial quality; past and future become not periods but places."¹⁶ If we prefer to read Milton's poetry from this perspective, Eliot's notion that images should "convey the feeling of

being in a particular place at a particular time" has little validity. As for the early poems, they have also yielded themselves to a mythic interpretation. Northrop Frye, who is a critic of the same mould as Mrs. MacCaffrey, sees "Lycidas" as a poem about the archetypal dying and reviving spirit of nature, of which Edward King is only an ectype.² The images which Milton uses are conventional, but this is not a defect because, as Frye points out, an archetype is "a literary symbol, or cluster of symbols, which are used recurrently throughout literature, and thereby become conventional."¹⁷

The arguments of Milton's defenders are much more convincing than Eliot's argument in his second essay because they can be more successfully applied to all of the poems. However, they can never be totally satisfactory because they are based on the assumption that Milton is a certain "type" of poet. The simple fact that these arguments are so different, and each equally convincing in a limited sense, means that Milton's poetry cannot be explained in terms of a system. Yet the critics seem to be agreed on one point: all of them hold Eliot's view that Milton's imagination tended to generalize rather than particularize. The problem, then, is not whether we are dealing with an imagination that generalizes or particularizes, but whether generalized imagery and strong musical powers of expression must necessarily lead to a "dissociation of sensibility," as Eliot says they must.

A few critics have refused to agree with Eliot's contention that particularity must be a necessary component of the visual image.

In his "Note on Milton's Imagery and Rhythm," Laurence Binyon disputed Eliot's claim that the lines in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" create a sensuous effect that has its appeal only to the ear. He felt that the artificial and conventional in the landscape of "L'Allegro" were the same kind of thing we find in seventeenth century painting, and this led him to the conclusion that the poem definitely "shows a painter's eye."¹⁸ Binyon was not alone in the particular stand he chose to take. Don Cameron Allen saw what he called "a high sort of visual description" in Paradise Lost where motion and light rather than colour and shape give life to the imagery;¹⁹ and Mrs. MacCaffrey, although she was prepared to say that "Milton's imagery is frequently non-visual because the incarnate abstract qualities of his 'properties' were as important as visible concrete ones," argued that visual images, when they appear, are certainly not inaccurate or vague.²⁰ These critical observations should not be taken lightly because they suggest that in literature or art in general there is more than one way of perceiving things. Eliot holds the theory that a visual image must be linear rather than blurred in outline, and particular in the sense that it gives an effect of multiplicity rather than unity. An objective poet will use this kind of image because his concern is with the immediacy and diversity of the world which exists apart from his own personality. However, there is another type of mind which sees things in terms of generalizations rather than particulars. Samuel Johnson, whom

Eliot himself calls a "great critic and poet," says of the meta-physical poets:

Their attempts were always analytick: they broke every image into fragments, and could no more represent by their slender conceits and laboured particularities the prospects of nature or the scenes of life, than he who dissects a sun-beam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer morn.²¹

This is obviously a mind that relates the visual to the general; for want of a better term we could call it a "subjective" mind because it tries to unify experience in terms of its own conviction of an ordered universe. For both Johnson and Milton the particular becomes blurred and indistinct, losing itself in the totality of the vision, but this does not mean that they do not "see" things. To "exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer morn" rather than the particular features of a summer morn is not to lack a visual imagination; it is simply another way of perceiving things.

Although the visual image can be defined as a sensation or presentation of something which is external to the onlooker, it is also representational. When a poet stresses representation his images lose their particularity, but in spite of this a picture which could be termed expansive rather than intensive is created for the eye. In Milton there is a composite of different kinds of images which gravitate towards representation, and these images seem to fall under three broad categories or groups. The first of these is the most concrete of the three. It is a conventional, generalized and sharp type of image which appears more frequently in the early poems and the detailed descriptions of Paradise in Paradise Lost. In this

type of image Milton's use of colour is most prominent. Because his colours are pure and used sparingly, they stand out vividly against a subdued background of shifting areas of light and shade. The second type of consistently recurring image is blurred yet, even though it is out of focus, it still retains a definite suggestion of the concrete. Varied textures of light and shade rather than colour give a subdued visual effect much the same as that in a painting by Rembrandt. Milton will frequently yoke images of this kind together in such a way that they defy consistency and project the feeling of dream states. This is precisely what he does in his treatment of Hell: as Kenneth Muir points out, the inconsistencies "give a nightmare quality which could not have been achieved in any other way."²² Eliot, in his second essay, refers to this group of images, but he seems to think that they are present throughout the whole of Paradise Lost:

I do not think that we should attempt to see very clearly any scene that Milton depicts; it should be accepted as a shifting phantasmagory. To complain, because we first find the arch-fiend 'chain'd on the burning lake,' and in a minute or two see him making his way to the shore, is to expect a kind of consistency which the world to which Milton has introduced us does not require.²³

Finally, Milton uses an extremely vague type of visual image (what Mrs. MacCaffrey calls "non-visual" or, in Allen's terms, "a high sort of visual description") which frequently eludes the eye because it verges on the "abstract" rather than the "concrete." Nowhere is the use of this kind of image more prominent than in Milton's treatment of Heaven. In Heaven the eye has to expand over a broad and

unlimited area where the effect is one of pure light because forms are translucent rather than opaque.

Even if we prefer to hold Eliot's view that sensation and visual particularity are the same thing, it is rather foolish to argue, as Leavis does, that there is a "sensuous poverty" in Milton.²⁴ Patrick Cruttwell also seems to think that this is the case, and he tries to set things in their proper perspective by making a distinction between the undramatic Puritan type of mind and the dramatic type of mind. As he sees it, the Puritan rejection of the senses is total and complete whereas in the dramatic type of mind the rejection of the senses is expressed "in thoroughly sensuous terms, so that the physical world has returned, as it were, by a back door."²⁵ Middleton Murry, in his essay, "Keats and Milton," makes a similar distinction between what he calls the "catholic feeling-type" and the "protestant feeling-type." In his view the catholic mind (Keats) emphasizes the Incarnation, whereas the protestant mind (Milton) emphasizes the Atonement.²⁶ Although the arguments of Cruttwell and Murry have some value, they are rather comically counterbalanced by W. B. C. Watkins' defence of Milton as a highly sensuous poet. Watkins sees a strong sensuous element not only in the early poems (as, for example, Mario Praz does)²⁷ but also in Paradise Lost, where the poet draws upon the combined resources of his five senses and even goes so far as to give "the most exquisite sensuous susceptibility and capacity to the upper reaches of his heirarchy."²⁸ Leavis, in

his preoccupation with the visual images and heavy rhythms of Paradise Lost, seems to overlook the fact that images of sound, touch, smell and taste play an important role in the sensuous fabric of Milton's poetry.

Some of the critics who rushed to the defence of Milton have concentrated their attention on the tone and rhythms of his poetry rather than on his visual imagery. Whether they admitted it or not their arguments were, in most cases, aimed at Leavis who had taken Eliot's negative comments on Milton's auditory imagination to a rather questionable extreme. The basic assertion Leavis makes in his essay is that Milton's sound is magniloquent, meaningless, and monotonous. He objects to the "heavy rhythmic pattern" of his verse because it leads to monotony. Furthermore, he believes that a pompous, Latinized diction which is so remote from common speech must, by its very nature, lack subtlety and "confirm an impoverishment from sensibility." Milton, he says, "exhibits a feeling for words rather than a capacity for feeling through words" because his words value themselves rather than "do what they say."²⁹

Sir Herbert Grierson approached a solution to the problem of Milton's pompous diction when he argued that some poets "are not content to confine themselves too rigidly to a 'language such as men do use', but claim for the poet the liberty to build for himself a statelier speech."³⁰ He points out that this was the case with Spenser, Dante and Virgil, as well as Milton. Grierson's argument is

not totally convincing, however, because it simply defends one poet's style by relating it to similar styles used by other poets. We have to ask ourselves why Milton chose to write in the style which is peculiar to his poetry. The fact that other poets followed a similar practice does not solve the problem. Robert Martin Adams' defence of Milton is more convincing and closer to the general trend of critical agreement. He agrees with Leavis that his style is monotonous and non-colloquial, but he says that this is true of the epic style generally. "It cannot shift tone radically," he says, "or modulate very far from its major key without seriously throwing things off balance. It simply cannot compete for flexibility and rhythmic variety with the stage or the dramatic lyric." Furthermore, he points out that in spite of a heavy and monotonous rhythmic beat, Paradise Lost has more "rhythmic variety" than most of the other heroic poems written in English.³¹ The most convincing defence of Milton's style comes from C. S. Lewis, who makes a distinction between Homeric Primary epic and Miltonic or Virgilian Secondary epic. He says that the Secondary epic, because it was written to be read rather than recited to musical accompaniment, has to have a highly elevated style to compensate for "those external aids to solemnity which the Primary enjoyed." He goes on to point out that Milton's "slightly unfamiliar words and constructions," his "use of proper names. . .because they are the names of splendid, remote, terrible, voluptuous, or celebrated things," and his "continued allusion to all the sources of heightened interest in our sense

experience," give his epic a ritualistic grandeur which it otherwise would not have.³²

Leavis' judgment that Milton has no "capacity for feeling through words" because his words value themselves, was also denounced as a rather perverse notion by the defending critics. B. Rajan, Donald Ramsay Roberts and Arnold Stein concentrated their attention on individual words and phrases, the smaller units of Milton's style, and came to the conclusion that sound and sense are inseparable in his poetry. Stein says that "patterns of sound are used with great confidence to shape and modulate metaphorical meaning;"³³ and Roberts argues that even "the length of the rhythmic numbers" is controlled by "the requirements of the underlying sense."³⁴ Rajan is willing to go even one step further when he points out that the verbal complication in Milton is a virtue because it heightens the aural suggestiveness of his poetry and in turn reinforces the underlying sense. "The deviations from the grammatical norm," he says, "are made only to create a steadier and more unremitting current of suggestion, to make more insistent the interplay of sound and evocation on which the impact and clarity of Milton's writing depends."³⁵

After these critics had thoroughly analyzed the relationship between sound and sense in Milton's poetry, there seemed to be nothing more to add to the controversy. However, in dealing with the poet's auditory imagination little attention was paid to images of sound and music in his verse. As Sigmund Spaeth and Banks point out, these

aural images frequently replace visual images to form part of the superstructure of a poem.³⁶ When this is the case we have to take the stand that because there is nothing for the eye the auditory imagination is existing entirely for itself alone. However, this does not necessarily have to be looked upon as a defect. Because Eliot preoccupies himself with the visual element in poetry, he seems to overlook the fact that images do not have to be visual to carry the meaning of a poem. Any isolated sense impression--whether it be visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory or gustative--carries a tissue of meaning because it is part of the totality of human experience. Because Milton is a poet of the five senses he will use different kinds of sense impressions as images to embody his thought.

With Milton references to the sound of the human voice and images of sounds in nature play an important role in the meaning of a poem. One of their most important functions is to suggest broad traits of character. However, the sound images which seem to recur most frequently are those which are connected with music. When we think of music in Milton we have to relate it to the Pythagorean concept of universal harmony. As Gretchen Finney points out, there is a "sounding through his poems of a musical world spirit."³⁷ This "musical world spirit," which is a "principle of concord or love," serves as a springboard for a whole series of musical images suggestive of either the harmony or discord of creation. It is impossible to

separate these images from the meaning of the poems because they are too intimately associated with one of Milton's deepest convictions.

Even if we choose to take the attitude that Milton's poetry is excessively auditory, to the point where it sacrifices sense for sound, we should remember that the attack on Milton grew out of an attitude to poetry which left him particularly susceptible to a fate he did not really deserve. The Imagists, a group of modern poets who drew their inspiration from the theories of T. E. Hulme, preferred to rely on the impact of the visual image, rather than on the impact of sound, as the most important element in poetry. In addition to this they emphasized the virtues of a dramatic, colloquial style, and set up the poetry of Donne and Shakespeare as a norm of excellence which a young poet should use as his model. This put Milton in a rather vulnerable position because Eliot, who consciously identified himself with the Imagists, was naturally suspicious of poetry that was undramatic, musical, and generalized rather than dramatic, unmusical, and particularized. Such uncompromising and biased views of art can be quite damaging if they lead to a serious deficiency in poetry. This is precisely what happened after the third decade of the twentieth century. Poetry descended to the level of prose after the Imagists insisted on visual accuracy in description, and those poets who could have revived the state of modern verse through their influence fell into obscurity simply because the Imagists

did not think they were good poets. The Georgian poets, who were certainly not as bad as we generally take them to be, suffered the same kind of fate as Milton because they were unsophisticated and passionate in their view of life. In the final analysis the question is not how bad Milton's poetry is when compared with the poetry the Imagists write but, rather, what particular merit does Milton's poetry have when we judge it as an achievement by itself? It is dangerous to compare the relative merits of different schools or theories of poetry; a poem must be judged by its own inner standards, which were part of the writer's organizing consciousness when he began the act of creation. It is right that we should try to understand the nature of Milton's imagination, but we must be careful not to draw any conclusions through comparisons with other writers and other schools of poetry.

CHAPTER I

MILTON'S VISUAL IMAGINATION

Every man is in part the creator of the world he perceives because sight is the mind looking through the eye to the object and not the object imprinting an image on the mind through the eye. When we read Milton, then, we have to realize that it would have been impossible for him to visualize things in the manner of Shakespeare or T. S. Eliot because his mind tended to order experience in terms of universals. In view of the fact that a mind which tries to order experience is one which is searching for meaning in experience, Eliot's assertion that Milton's generalized imagery detracts from the sense of his poetry is, to say the least, rather perplexing. Generalized imagery can adapt itself not only to one level of meaning but to a number of different, often contradictory, levels of meaning. Milton's images and epic similes never have a purely decorative function; on the contrary, they pull the major themes of his poetry into a concrete visual perspective.

Milton's poetry has something in common with medieval and renaissance painting because his visual images stand as symbols for an underlying abstract reality and fit into a carefully wrought, well-

balanced design. The meaning of the "Nativity Ode," for example, rests on a design highly reminiscent of painted nativity scenes, where the infant Christ occupies the center of the canvas as a symbol of sinless purity and peace and the other symbols revolve around the center and gather their significance from it. The second and third stanzas of "The Hymn" contain four key symbols--the dove, the snow, the myrtle wand, and the crown of olives--which are of the conventional or stock variety that recur throughout renaissance art, yet here they are arranged as if they formed part of the complex design of a painting. The landscape is covered with snow, a traditional symbol of purity, and the dove, which carries a similar meaning, hovers over the head of the Virgin. The dove is also associated with the olive crown as a symbol of peace.¹ The myrtle wand adds meaning to the poem because its importance in Christian art as a symbol of love amplifies the theme of God's love for man which manifests itself in the birth of Christ.²

Although the "Nativity Ode" seems to show the influence of painting on Milton's imagination,³ it would be both impossible and foolish to attempt to read all of his poems as if they were nothing more than painted canvases. The light-darkness symbolism which plays such an important role in his poetry has its source elsewhere, perhaps in the writings of Ficino and Kircher, as Don Cameron Allen would have us believe. In the "Nativity Ode" many of the key symbols develop out of a contrast between the spiritual darkness of the

pagan gods, cloaked with a reflected or false illumination of virtue, and the divine light of the Messiah (expressed by the aureole in painting) which emanates from within. Milton describes Christ as the "greater Sun," whereas the light of the real sun, who "hid his head for shame" because of his "inferiour" beams, symbolizes both the temporal cycle of birth (light) and death (darkness) and the reflected radiance of the pagan deities which "the new-enlightn'd world no more should need."⁴ The stars which "will not take their flight" are linked with Christ's divinity as symbols of divine favour in a spiritually darkened and depraved world, and contrasted with Lucifer, the morning star, a symbol of the sensuous and diabolical through its association with Venus and the devil. The landscape of Milton's poem is the fallen world "pollute with sinful blame," a world of shadowy forms and vague illuminations where Moloch's "furnace" casts a dim light on the altars and oracles. All of the pagan gods seem to recede out of the picture into darkness, or they assume a posture of dejection or amazement when they feel the diminished strength of their infernal power.

We have strong evidence that Milton used colour imagery with a definite purpose in mind in the Ninth Sonnet, where green is associated with the "broad way" or the life of pleasure. In the "Nativity Ode" there are five references to colours of the spectrum: green, the colour of the olive crown; red, twice mentioned as the colour of fire and the rising sun; blue, associated

with Moloch's furnace; and yellow, the colour of the skirts of the departing Fates. Although Milton's references to green and red seem to have no real significance which transcends their appropriateness as modifiers, the other colour images radiate definite overtones of meaning. Milton follows Shakespeare in identifying blue--presumably the colour of the fire which burns within Moloch's furnace--with a world of superstition and evil. In Shakespeare's Richard III the "lights burn blue" after Richard has seen the ghosts of his murdered victims,⁵ because it was commonly believed that a candle flame would become blue if a ghost or an evil spirit was present. Milton's reference to the colour yellow, on the other hand, should be related to the gold imagery which plays such an important role in his later poems. In Paradise Lost gold is associated with both the divine and the daemonic: it can be a symbol of the magnificence and splendour of God or a symbol of Satan's deceitfulness. Because Milton's Fates are part of the Satanic world of deceptive superstition, they are described as "yellow-skirted."

The "Nativity Ode" makes a good approach to the study of Milton's visual imagery because it incorporates most of the important images which serve as an organizing principle in the later poems. Yet, as we might expect, in both Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, the Miltonic simile becomes important as a device to objectify the supernatural. The world of the fallen angels, for example, is given outline and perspective in epic similes which relate the vague and superhuman to the concrete and mundane. When Satan is described as

a wolf or a vulture we can relate him to something familiar, whereas in the passages which do not draw upon the resources of the epic simile the emotional force of his personality remains with us, rather than any well-defined visual impression. In Paradise Lost, Milton consistently uses the epic simile in his treatment of Hell and Paradise. However, when he deals with Heaven this is not the case. God, who is perfect, cannot be conceived in terms of comparison because comparison or metaphor implies imperfection.

PARADISE

In Milton's visual treatment of Paradise the objects and human figures which populate his landscape are always symbolically relevant to the particular situation at hand. In Book IX, for example, one of the descriptive passages which prepares us for the temptation scene (385-462) emphasizes the instability of Eve's state of mind and foreshadows events which are to follow. Although this passage is too long to quote in full, the isolated visual images or clusters of visual images which appear throughout can be dealt with separately and related to Eve. In the opening lines Milton says that Eve, after disclaiming any thought of her weakness in the face of temptation,

like a Wood-Nymph light
 Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's Traine,
 Betook her to the Groves, but Delia's self
 In gate surpass'd and Goddess-like deport,
 Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver arm'd,
 But with such Gardning Tools as Art yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire had form'd, or Angels brought.
 To Pales, or Pomona, thus adornd,
 Likest she seem'd, Pomona when she fled
 Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her Prime,
 Yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.
 (ll. 386-396)

Eve, who stands in the center of Milton's verbal canvas, is the "fair Virgin" who will be "despoild of Innocence. . .Faith, [and] Bliss" by the wily Satan. Her innocence and vulnerability are concretized in appropriate mythological figures who seem to populate the landscape of Paradise. The pure life of chastity is implied through associative references: Delia is the patron goddess of chastity; Ceres lived as a virgin goddess in the garden of Enna, a place of eternal spring; and Pomona, who also lived in a garden, built a wall to protect herself from her suitors. However, Milton's allusions to classical myth are weighted with a deeper significance. Eve is armed with nothing more than "Gardning Tools," whereas Delia armed herself with a "Bow and Quiver." The implication here is that Eve, unlike Delia or Pales, the Roman guardian of flocks, will have no defence against evil. Ceres' virgin spring was changed to sorrow when Dis carried her daughter, Proserpina, down to the underworld, and Pomona, although she resisted the god Vertumnus at first, eventually fell under his spell. Eve will likewise succumb to the temptations of evil and feel the weight of sorrow and death.

The "Flourie Plat" in which Eve labours is related to mythical gardens. Milton describes it as a

Spot more delicious then those Gardens feignd
Or of reviv'd Adonis, or renown'd
Alcinous, host of old Laertes Son,
Or that, not Mystic, where the Sapient King
Held dalliance with his faire Egyptian Spouse.
(11. 439-443)

Milton never rejects the sensuous in his treatment of Paradise. His grove is, in fact, a highly sensuous landscape, a "spot more delicious" than the gardens of Adonis, Alcinous and Solomon. Yet there are deeper levels of meaning in these mythical and historical allusions which rise to the surface and serve, once more, as a foreshadowing of future events. Adonis was killed by a boar because he refused to heed Venus' warning that wild animals are dangerous to hunt.⁶ Eve is in fact hunting a wild animal herself and, as Milton pointed out earlier, she does not have the appropriate weapons to defend herself. Her sin is disobedience to Adam's superior reason as Adonis' sin was disobedience to the will of the goddess Venus. The allusion to Homer's garden of Alcinous brings to mind the Eighth Book of the Odyssey when Demodocus' retelling of the fall of Troy moves Ulysses to tears. Because of Helen the Greeks bled at Troy and Ulysses wept, and because of Eve man will fall into a world of sorrow, death and suffering. The garden of the "Sapient King" is linked with Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter.⁷ Because Milton's Pharaoh is the "River-dragon,"⁸ an ectype of Satan the "infernal Serpent," the implication here is that Satan will precipitate Adam's downfall through Eve, who will be

nothing more than his instrument after she has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge.

Eve, as she labours to prop the "drooping unsustained" flowers, is associated with a number of important flower symbols which reflect the precariousness of her state of mind. Milton says that when Satan first saw her from a distance she was only "Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round/About her glowd." In Christian symbology the red rose usually represents martyrdom, whereas with the pagans it was a symbol of pride. The myrtle plant, which Eve uses to support the flowers, has always been associated with love. Because the rose symbol is packed with a double meaning, Milton seems to be suggesting that Eve, who is described as a "fairest unsupported Flour" herself, could be stooping either out of self-love like the mythical Narcissus who gazed on his own image in the water, or out of unselfish humility and humble obedience to God's will like the Christian martyrs who remained steadfast in the face of temptation. Satan, who represents the extremity of pride, is lurking in the bushes, and Eve could be bowing either towards him or away from him.

When dealing with Paradise Milton had to use symbols which would fit into the texture of an idealized world. Although these symbols could radiate different levels of meaning, some of them pointing to the world of fallen nature, on the surface they had to be appropriate. After the Fall, however, Milton could pull his ideas into a natural texture less foreign to our everyday experiences of visual

phenomena. In Book XI of Paradise Lost Eve's conviction that, even though fallen, both she and Adam can live content with what they still possess, is frustrated when nature gives "mute signs" of what is to ensue:

The Bird of Jove, stoopt from his aerie tour,
Two Birds of gayest plume before him drove:
Down from a Hill the Beast that reigns in Woods,
First Hunter then, persu'd a gentle brace,
Goodliest of all the Forrest, Hart and Hinde;
Direct to th' Eastern Gate was bent thir flight.
(ll. 185-190)

Here, as in the descriptive passage which precedes the temptation scene, the symbols reflect a state of mind and anticipate future events. Because both Adam and Eve are fallen creatures despoiled of innocence by pride, the landscape is described in fallen terms itself. The lion and eagle, traditional symbols of pride,⁹ pursue animals which represent innocence and religious piety. In the flight of the pursuers and the pursued towards the eastern gate we have a foreshadowing of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.

In the transition from unfallen nature to fallen nature Milton's references to an intensified darkness in Paradise are also symbolically relevant to the spiritual condition of Adam and Eve. Adam, whose mind has been darkened by sin, avoids the light of day and hides "in gloomiest shade,/To sorrow abandond" (X, 716-17). The night is no longer "Wholsom and cool, and mild, but with black Air/Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom" (X, 847-48). Milton's colours are reduced in intensity. The only reference in Paradise Lost to the colour brown, for example, comes in Book IX when Adam

says

O might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscur'd, where highest Woods impenetrable
To Starr or Sun-light, spread thir umbrage broad,
And brown as Eevning.
(11. 1084-1088)

The colour brown and the thick wood--images of spiritual corruption¹⁰ and confusion--are externalized aspects of the inescapable results of evil which have manifested themselves in the minds of Adam and Eve.

HELL

Milton's Hell lacks the clear visual outlines which are characteristic of Paradise. It is a world which reflects the irrational substratum of our minds, a world of vague outlines and dream-like inconsistencies where forms are constantly shifting and melting into each other. When we read the first two hundred lines of Paradise Lost, for example, we never really "see" Hell because it is variously described as a "fiery Gulfe," a "Dungeon horrible," a "great Furnace" and a "gloomy Deep." Furthermore, Satan and other rebel angels are usually described in abstract terms which carry the overwhelming emotional force of their personalities, yet do nothing to give them sharp visual outlines.¹¹ Upon reading the few passages in Book I, which give us our clearest visual impression of Satan, we are impressed by the Promethean figure, yet his outlines are blurred:

round he throws his baleful eyes
 That witnessd huge affliction and dismay
 Mixt with obdurate pride and stedfast hate.
 (ll. 56-58)

With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
 That sparkling blaz'd; his other Parts besides
 Prone on the Flood, extended long and large
 Lay floating many a rood. . .
 (ll. 193-196)

. . . hee above the rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent
 Stood like a Tower. . .
 (ll. 589-591)

. . . his face
 Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under Browes
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride
 Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion.
 (ll. 600-605)

Milton's images of light and darkness in Hell form the same kind of blurred visual backdrop and carry the same kind of meaning that we find in the "Nativity Ode." Satan and the rebel angels fall into darkness because they are spiritually dark, yet they clothe themselves with the external trappings of virtue. Throughout his treatment of Hell Milton juxtaposes images of light and darkness to give an appropriate visual effect. His description of Satan is typical:

his form had not yet lost
 All her Original brightness; nor appeared
 Less than Arch-Angel ruind, and th' excess
 Of Glory obscur'd: . . .
 . . . Dark'nd so, yet shon
 Above them all th' Arch-Angel.
 (ll. 591-594, 599-600)

In Satan's make-up darkness and light merge into one as they do in the "darkness visible" of Hell itself. The gold imagery in Hell ties in with the light imagery to emphasize this false illumination of virtue. Pandemonium, which is lighted within by "Starry Lamps and blazing Cressets" and surmounted with an architrave and roof of gold, is an expression of Satan's pride and deceit, though it seems to duplicate the magnificence of Heaven.

In spite of the fact that Milton emphasizes abstractions, inconsistencies and images of light and darkness in his treatment of Hell, the visual appeal of his poetry is not diminished to any great extent because his epic similes give outline and perspective to the world of the supernatural. When Satan is likened to Leviathan, for example, Milton brings everything into focus:

Him haply slumbring on the Norway foam
 The Pilot of some small night-founderd Skiff,
 Deeming some Iland, oft, as Sea-men tell,
 With fixed Anchor in his skaly rinde
 Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
 Invests the Sea, and wished Morn delays:
 So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
 Chained on the burning Lake.

(I, 203-210)

The image of a "slumbring" whale, which seems to be something it is not, is well suited to a simile describing Satan because in Christian symbolism the whale represented the devil's deceitfulness and cunning.¹² When we look at the other images which Milton brings into the context of his epic simile we find that we have here what is in fact a highly compressed allegory anticipating the Fall of Adam and Eve. Man--who

is the "pilot" of his soul because he has free will--puts his hope (symbolized by the anchor) in the devil after he has been deceived by his cunning. The darkness which "invests the Sea" parallels his fall into spiritual darkness; and the reference to dawn has its traditional significance as a symbol of the blood Christ shed for man and the triumph over sin.¹³ The delayed rising of the sun parallels the long lapse of time between Moses' prophecy of Christ's birth and the historical event itself.

Milton will sometimes distort the historical accuracy of his epic similes in order to make them more meaningful. However, this does not mean that they are non-visual--it simply means that the reader must exercise a "willing suspension of disbelief" and see history as Milton wants him to see it. Theodore Banks, in Milton's Imagery, was rather disconcerted by Milton's propensity to give inexact descriptions of real places. One simile in Paradise Lost which disturbs him is Milton's reference to the fallen angels

who lay intranst
Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High overarcht imbowr.

(I, 301-304)

"The streams at Vallombrosa," Banks says, "could not be thickly covered with leaves because the high overarching trees consist almost entirely of evergreens."¹⁴ What he fails to realize, however, is that Milton is not as concerned with giving an accurate visual picture as he is with utilizing words and images which radiate overtones of meaning

consistent with his theme. His choice of the word "Vallombrosa" is appropriate because its meaning, "Shady Valley," reinforces his conception of Hell as a "gloomy Deep" or "Dungeon horrible." Furthermore, whether or not it can be applied to the historical Vallombrosa, the leaf imagery blends into the infernal landscape because of its traditional association with death and the underworld, "the comparison of spirits in the underworld to fallen leaves [being] of great antiquity."¹⁵

In the simile on Leviathan, cited earlier, there is a reference to "foam" which is inaccurate visually, yet again, Milton's concern here is with the appropriate overtones of meaning a word can carry as a symbol. The picture of the whale sleeping on the "Norway foam" gives a dream-like quality which suggests in clear visual terms Satan's indistinct world of the irrational and inconsistent. There is also a relationship between this image and the myth of the Titans (to which Milton alludes in the lines which immediately precede the Leviathan simile). After Uranus cast the Cyclopes and Hecatoncheires out of Heaven, Cronus avenged their fall by severing the god's genitals and throwing them into the sea, where they engendered the foam that gave birth to Venus.¹⁶ Milton has of course distorted the Greek myth because his reference is to Satan rather than to Venus. However, this distortion, which relates the diabolical to sensuous love, amplifies the meaning of his simile and gives it the same kind of double significance as the reference to the evening star in the "Nativity Ode."

In his treatment of Satan Milton consistently uses animal imagery to symbolize traits of character.¹⁷ These images are always meaningful and relevant to the particular situation which is being described. Throughout Paradise Lost, for example, Milton emphasizes the fact that Satan is a magnificent creature only when he is in his own element. In his journey through Chaos, then, he appears as the magnificent and terrifying Griffin of legend, an animal which Sir Thomas Browne, in Pseudodoxia Epidemica, sees as an emblem of attention, courage, tenacity and magnanimity.¹⁸

When Satan comes out of his own element into the outskirts of Paradise and Heaven, however, his strength and magnificence begin to diminish. When he is questioned by the angels who have discovered him in Paradise (IV, 858-859) he is compared to a "Steed," which renaissance artists used as a symbol of lust. His fierceness is no longer emphasized because the horse was generally looked upon as an animal which "hath no gall."¹⁹ In Paradise Regained Satan, the tempter of Christ, is likened to a fly:

as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet moust is powrd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
.
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever; and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not ore though desperat of success,
And his vain importunity persues.
 (IV, 15-17, 21-24)

In the presence of Christ Satan is diminished to the point where he is nothing more than a troublesome nuisance.²⁰ In the image of

the winepress, which in Christian terms symbolizes the wrath of God,²¹ we have a clear foreshadowing of the Last Judgment when Satan and the rebel angels will be "trod down" under the feet of Christ.

Milton's animal similes frequently have ironic implications. This is true, for example, when he describes the defeated rebel angels being driven by Christ through the opened "Crystal wall of Heav'n":

The overthrown he rais'd, and as a Herd
Of Goats or timerous flock together throngd
Drove them before him Thunder-strook.
(VI, 856-858)

The allusion to goats is appropriate because of their association with lust and the damned souls of the Last Judgment.²² Yet the reference to "timerous" sheep seems to jar the meaning of the simile. However, Milton's intention here was to develop a sense of the absurd and comic in the activities of the rebel angels by bringing together two images of contradictory significance. When he compares the fallen angels to bees he creates a similar kind of comic effect:

As Bees

In spring time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
Poure forth thir populous youth about the Hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Flie to and fro, or on the smoothed Plank,
The suburb of thir Straw-built Cittadel,
New rubd with Baume, expatiate and conferr
Thir State affairs. So thick the aerie crowd
Swarmd and were strait'nd.
(I, 796-776)

In medieval and renaissance iconography bees are associated with the community that sustains itself through hard work and devotion to God, and the honey which they produce is symbolic of religious eloquence.²³ The ironic overtones of this passage are also implicit in the reference to the revival of nature in the spring when the sun, in Taurus,²⁴ has triumphed over the darkness of winter. Satan's apparent resurrection from darkness into light will bring death rather than life to Adam and Eve because he is motivated by envy and revenge instead of love.

At times Milton's ironic references are much more subtle, and because this is so they have often been misinterpreted and explained by critics as nothing more than a reflection of a kind of baroque tendency to value decorative effects for their own sake. The simile which Milton uses to pull Satan's approach to Paradise into a sharp visual context is a good example of the kind of subtle irony he is capable of:

As when to them who saile
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mezambic, off at Sea North-East windes blow
Sabeian Odours from the spicie shoare
Of Arabie the blest, with such delay
Well pleas'd they slack thir course, and many a League
Cheard with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.
So entertaind those odorous sweets the Fiend.
(IV, 159-166)

"Arabie the blest" is obviously a reference to Paradise, a kind of historical ectype of the archetypal Garden which was created and favoured by God. The Cape of Hope, another geographical reference,

brings to mind the opening lines of Book II in Paradise Lost where Satan is described as "uplifted beyond hope" in his irrational urge to initiate "vain Warr with Heav'n." However, it is Milton's careful use of irony which gives this passage its full impact. If we compare this simile with an earlier one in Book II (ll. 636-643) where Satan, in his flight to the gates of Hell, is likened to a fleet of merchant ships plying "through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape," its ironical implications become clear. Merchants travel beyond the Cape of Hope because of their desire for peaceful trade. Satan, on the other hand, is driven by his desire for revenge; he has nothing to give Adam and Eve but death, and he can receive nothing from them but their unwilling subservience to his will.

HEAVEN

When Milton wrote about Heaven he could not describe it in metaphorical terms because God, being perfect, is outside the fallen world of ambiguities. He had to use a simplified and austere language, a flat language of statement very different from Shakespeare's dramatic language of counterbalanced tensions. Because God is beyond comparison he is invisible,²⁵ and we see only the blinding radiance that hides him. Like the early Christian painters, Milton uses light and cloud images to symbolize divine love and the unseen presence of God.²⁶ Along with occasional references to God's hand and eye, these light and cloud images have additional importance in Milton's concern with imper-

fect or fallen vision and perfect or unfallen vision.

Milton's conception of divine love as pure light is implicit in the "Nativity Ode" where he refers to Christ as the "greater Sun." In Paradise Lost his cloud imagery becomes important. When the angels in Heaven hymn their praise of God, he is described in these terms:

Author of all being,
Fountain of Light, thy self invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant Shrine,
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appeer,
Yet dazle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil thir eyes.
(III, 374-382)

In this passage the cloud is obviously important as a symbol of the unseen god.²⁷ However, if we relate it to angelic states of mind it takes on added importance as a symbol of imperfection. It is impossible for the unfallen angels to see the divine light of God in its pure essence because they are not perfect.²⁸ The imperfection of their vision, then, is symbolically embodied in the cloud image.

In Book II of Paradise Lost Mammon says:

How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heav'ns all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his Glory unobscur'd,
And with the Majesty of darkness round
Covers his Throne; from whence deep thunders roar
Must'ring thir rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell?
(II, 263-268)

As in the Bible, the dark cloud is important here as a symbol of the wrath of God.²⁹ However, it is also related to Mammon's fallen vision or his inability to see God as anything more than a tyrant. Because

he feels that obedience to an "envied Sovran" would put him under "the easie yoke/Of servil Pomp" the cloud imagery takes on a dark and foreboding quality and "Heav'n resembles Hell." Mammon's pride prevents him from seeing the "glorious brightness" of God which is divine love. Abdiel, on the other hand, sees God as a God of love rather than a punisher, and as a consequence the greater perfection of his vision is reflected in the image of the "Gold'n Cloud" (VI, 28). In his presentation of Christ, who is the limit of perfection, Milton dispenses with his cloud imagery altogether. Because Christ's vision is perfect he sees the Father "without Cloud" (XI, 45).

The hand images in Milton's treatment of Heaven suggest the physical strength of God--his power to create or punish--yet, like the cloud images, their real importance lies in their relationship with different states of mind. In Book II of Paradise Lost, God's "red right hand" (174)³⁰--which should be related to the "dredded Infants hand" of the "Nativity Ode"--is a reflection of Satan's state of mind. God is a punisher because Satan is a punisher. After the Fall Adam also sees God as a punisher because his sin of pride has engendered a latent capacity for tyranny in himself:

why delayes
His hand to execute what his Decree
Fixed on this day?
(X, 771-773)

The angels in Heaven, on the other hand, see God's "copious hand" (V, 641) because their minds are not disposed to see things from a Satanic perspective.

Throughout Paradise Lost the eye of God, which symbolizes his all-knowing omnipotence, is described as the "unsleeping" eye (V, 647) or the eye which is not shut. In contrast to the eye of Satan or fallen man it is the translucent rather than the opaque eye. Satan's eye is opaque because his ignorance and pride cut him off from the divine light of God, the source of purity and truth, and kept him locked in the dungeon of his own mind.³¹ A true perception of the divine light--or, as Shelley would have it, the "white radiance of Eternity"--necessitates self-sacrifice or a recognition of the authority of God and the integrity of others; otherwise the senses will be darkened with the shadows of ignorance and proud self-esteem which hide the introverted self. As early as the "Nativity Ode" Milton exploited eye symbolism in his characteristic fashion when he alluded to the "dusky eyn" of Osiris. In Paradise Lost he refers to the dark eye or the red eye of Satan. The first time we see Satan in Hell he is lying on the "burning lake"

With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
That sparkling blaz'd
(I, 193-194),

and when Sin relates the circumstances of her birth to Satan, she tells him how his eyes were dimmed:

All on a sudden miserable pain
Surpris'd thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzie swumm
In darkness.
(II, 752-754).

After the Fall the eyes of Adam and Eve are also dimmed when they begin to cloud with tears of self-pity (X, 1101).

In Paradise Lost the key passage, which explains the symbolical importance of Milton's eye imagery is in Book III when God reveals his divine plan for the future generations of men:

I will cleer thir senses dark,
 What may suffice, and soft'n stonie hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
 To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endevord with sincere intent,
 Mine eare shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
 And I will place within them as a guide
 My Umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
 Light after light well us'd they shall attain,
 And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
 This my long sufferance and my day of Grace
 They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
 But hard be hard'nd, blind be blinded more,
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
 And none but such from mercy I exclude.

(ll. 188-202)

What Milton is in fact saying here is that man, himself, is the creator of his Heaven and Hell. Prayer, repentance and obedience can open man's eyes to the heavenly light of God because they bring him out of his introverted self; pride, impenitence and disobedience, on the other hand, close the eye and force us to see things as if we were caught in a hellish nightmare. Because Hell is a state of mind, Milton has to describe it as a "mournful gloom" as if he were looking through the eyes of Satan. When he describes the throne of God he has to see it as if he were looking through the eyes of one of the Seraphim who "approach not, but with both wings veil thir eyes."

Some of the passages in Paradise Lost which have bothered T. S. Eliot and other critics the most are the long lists of names

which appear to have no functional purpose outside of the musical effect they create for the ear.³² A passage which Eliot singled out for criticism was the one in which Michael shows Adam the kingdoms of the world from a hill in Paradise. "I can enjoy the roll," he says, "of

Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temirs Throne,
To Paquin of Sinaean Kings, and thence
To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul
Down to the gold'n Chersonese, or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sate, or since
In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar
In Mosce, or the Sultan in Bizance,
Turchestan-born

(XI, 388-396)

and the rest of it, but I feel that this is not serious poetry, not poetry fully occupied about its business, but rather a solemn game."³³ Eliot believes that these highly musical lines do not carry the thought of Milton's poetry. However, had he been more conscious of what the argument of the Tenth Book of Paradise Lost is, he might have seen things from a different perspective. What Milton is in fact trying to do here is to impress on the reader's mind the effect which Adam's sin will have on succeeding generations of men. The allusions to Mosco and the Russian Ksar were undoubtedly associated, in Milton's mind, with the perversion of devotion which manifests itself in a Christian Church "with excess of superstitions" and a clergy which is guilty of "whoredom, drunkenness and extortion."³⁴ Through evoking other highly significant individuals and place names, Milton emphasizes the fact that man, after the Fall, will be pulled into the stream of

time or the recurring cycle of history. The rise and decay of great empires is suggested in the references to the "Sultan in Bizance" and the Mongol (Cathaian) and national (Sinaean) rulers of China who both made Peking (Cambalu or Paquin) their capital.³⁵ The evanescence of human glory is suggested in the reference to Temir, or Tamerlane, who built a short-lived Mongol empire out of his vanity and cruelty. Samarchand, his magnificent capital, was a city of palaces, academies and vineyards, yet it was also the site of his mausoleum. Agra (also the site of a mausoleum, the Taj Mahal), Ecbatan, the "golden Chersonese," Lahor and Hispahan--the seats of the Moguls, Cyrus, and the rulers of Sumatra, the Punjab and Persia--were other short-lived realms and cities which had a brief moment of glory. Through all of these references the connotations of magnificence, defeat and decay are both obvious and meaningful because vision is consonant with the poet's thought.

CHAPTER II

MILTON'S AUDITORY IMAGINATION - PART 1

Those critics who say that Milton's blindness led to an emphasis on the presentation of experience in terms of sound, probably have some justice on their side. However, the fact that Milton incorporated auditory impressions into poems written before he became blind is an indication that this view is not sufficient in itself to explain why his imagination was attracted to sound. When we read a poem like "Comus," for example, we find that references to sound and music frequently displace visual, olfactory, and tactile images, or else fuse with them as in the poet's reference to the "soft and solemn breathing sound" of the Lady's voice that rises "like a steam of rich distill'd Perfumes" (555-56). Because sound is emphasized so much in Milton's early poems, and because this emphasis frequently takes the form of references to music, we must say that it was Milton's musical background, rather than his blindness, which had the most powerful influence on his imagination.

It would be impossible to overemphasize the degree to which music exerted an influence on the youthful Milton. We know that John Milton, Sr., who was recognized as one of the better composers of his day, gave his son a good musical education and encouraged him

to develop his fine singing voice and his proficiency as a keyboard instrumentalist.¹ Furthermore, some of Milton's closest friends--Henry Lawes among them--were musicians. By the time the "Nativity Ode" was written, Milton had developed a philosophy of music and sound based on his strong conviction that the universe, which was once a harmoniously ordered system, had fallen into discord. In his essay, "On the Music of the Spheres," he says that man's inability to hear the "symphony of the heavens" was "a consequence of the insolence of the robber, Prometheus, which brought so many evils upon men, and at the same time deprived us of that felicity which we shall never be permitted to enjoy as long as we wallow in sin and are brutalized by our animal desires."² This allusion to Prometheus and the theft of fire from heaven obviously corresponds to the eating of the apple in the Garden of Eden. Throughout his poetry Milton equates discord with the evil that man precipitated upon himself and the world after he ate from the Tree of Knowledge. In other words, the Fall had an effect on man's ear as well as his eye. The mind hears things as well as sees things and if, like Satan's mind, it has disobeyed the will of God and initiated revolt because of irrational pride, it will hear the discord wrought by its own sin. "If our hearts were as pure, as chaste, as snowy as Pythagoras' was," on the other hand, then "our ears would resound and be filled with that supremely lovely music of the wheeling stars."³ This is as much as to say that man is the creator of the sounds he hears.

The images of music and sound in the "Nativity Ode" set the pattern for Milton's later poems. In this poem Milton contrasts the discord of the fallen world with the concord of heavenly music. The sounds of warlike barbarism are silenced with the coming of Christ because sinless purity is the source of concord. The "Crystall sphears" moving "in melodious time" and "the Base of Heav'ns deep Organ" symbolize the universal harmony that those awake to the message of Christ will hear after "the wakefull trump of doom" has announced the Second Coming. Until the Second Coming, however, "th' old Dragon" or Satan is "in straiter limits bound" and the false gods utter a last feeble protest of despair. The harsh dissonance of the "Timbrel'd Anthems" and the "Cymbals ring" still echo through the landscape, but now they are accompanied by voices "of weeping. . .and loud lament."

In Paradise Lost obedience to the will of God is the source of concord because, like the laws of musical harmony, it is founded on reason; disobedience, on the other hand, is discord, the "Daughter of Sin" and the initiator of death "through fierce antipathie" (P. L. X. 708-9), because it is an expression of man's irrational instinct. Although Satan does not represent the extreme limit of discord--Chaos is more divested of order--his temptation of Eve is an invitation to discord as well as to sin. When Adam and Eve aspire to climb higher in the great chain of being, they disobey the will of God, and after the Fall the harmony of the universe is disturbed. In more pre-

cise musical terms this is the same thing as saying that one of "the chains that ty/The hidden soul of harmony" ("L'Allegro," 143-4) has produced an unnatural note which is dissonant with the rest of the chord.

In spite of the fact that Satan is an initiator of discord, there is a great deal of beautiful music in his world. This is as it should be because, since Satan and his followers were once numbered with the "blest voices" of heaven, they preserve their ability to create music that is pleasing to the ear in either a melodic or a harmonic sense. Throughout Paradise Lost Milton emphasizes the fact that both divine and daemonic music can "lull" or "charm" the senses of the listener. However, there is a distinction between these two kinds of enchantment. Divine music charms the senses of the listener, yet it also gives him knowledge or understanding of the rational order which underlies the flux of creation. Although it may dissolve him "into extasies," like the sound of the organ in "Il Penseroso," it sharpens his perceptions and brings "all Heav'n before [his] eyes" (165-6).⁴ Because this kind of music often manifests itself as a highly complex arrangement of sounds it can appear to be confused, like the music of the organist in Book XI of Paradise Lost whose

volant touch
Instinct through all proportions low and high
Fled and Persu'd transverse the resonant fugue.
(561-3).

Yet there is no harshness in this music because, mathematically, it is perfect, with each melodic line fusing into a unified and well-

proportioned whole. Daemonic music, on the other hand, may appear to be well-proportioned, yet it is not in effect an expression of pure harmony because each voice sings independently. As Milton points out when he refers to the music of the rebel angels,

Thir Song was partial, but the harmony
 (What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
 Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
 The thronging audience.
 (II, 552-5).

Like divine music, the music of the fallen angels can ravish the listener. However, because it is an expression of the irrational selfhood it drugs the reason and leads to madness like the music of Dionysus in Greek myth.

In Paradise Lost obedience to God's will finds its most perfect expression in Heaven; consequently the ceremony of Heaven is described in terms of musical concord. The praise of God is the harmony of angelic voices lifted in song:

The multitude of Angels with a shout
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
 As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heav'n rung
 With Jubilee, and loud Hosanna's filld
 Th' eternal Regions.
 (III, 345-9).

Discord has no place in this music because each angel praises the same subject, the divine source of unity and concord. Milton is particularly fond of the organ and of plucked stringed instruments as symbols of divine harmony. In "Of Education," he singles out the

organ and the lute as instruments which "have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions;"⁵ and after the creation episode in Paradise Lost, the angels sing to the accompaniment of "all Organs of sweet stop,/All sounds on Fret by String or Gold'n Wire" (VII, 596-7).⁶ Milton's choice of these instruments is not simply an arbitrary one. By itself an organ or a stringed instrument is capable of producing harmony, whereas a flute or a trumpet can produce only a single melodic line.⁷ Because the ability to harmonize demands a higher degree of intellectual discipline than the ability to play a single melody, the instruments of Heaven are appropriate for the unfallen angels who are more thoroughly enlightened by reason than the rebel angels. As individual musicians, the rebel angels play nothing more than plain-songs on pipes and trumpets and, from the standpoint of the listener, this tends to deaden rather than animate the intellect.⁸ As Milton points out in his "Animadversions," "if men should ever be thumbing the drone of one plain song, it would be a dull opiate to the most wakeful attention."⁹ In addition to his references to stringed instruments and the organ Milton uses the image of the dance as a symbol of concord in Heaven. The angels dance to the music of the spheres in

mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolve'd yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem.
(V, 622-4).

Although the dance, like the universe itself, may appear to be confused, it is in fact an expression of harmonious order.

Heaven is the divine source of concord, yet the unfallen Garden is not unlike Heaven because it is a copy of the source. The creation episode in Paradise Lost represents the imposition of harmony on Chaos. Christ, when he begins his journey through Chaos to create the new world, stills the roar of its confused elements:

Silence, ye troubl'd waves, and thou Deep, peace,
Said then th' Omnific Word, your discord end.
(VII, 216-7).

After Paradise has been created Adam and Eve live in a world of sinless purity and harmony where

Universal Pan
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance
Led on th' Eternal Spring.
(IV, 266-8).

The image of the dance suggests degree and the harmonious music of the spheres which revolve around the created world "in mystic Dance not without Song" (V, 178). Like the organ in the "Nativity Ode," the "amorous descant" of the nightingale (IV, 603) stands as another symbol of harmonious order. This harmony sounds in the ears of Adam and Eve. Because their minds are not yet "warped earthward, and. . . defective in every heavenly element"¹⁰ they can hear

Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to others note
Singing thir great Creator.
(IV, 682-4).

Milton, in his characteristic fashion, contrasts the central symbols of his setting with other symbols which represent false appearance or unreality. The song of the nightingale and the dance of Pan are counterbalanced by references to other kinds of musical activity which, in the words of the poet, should be "quitted with disdain." These are the "Mixt Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Ball,/Or Serenate, which the starv'd Lover sings" (IV, 768-9). Milton's references to this kind of musical activity--the music of romance or courtly love--foreshadow the Fall and the worship of the false goddess of virtue which will manifest itself in the fallen world. The fall of Adam resulted from his weakness in the face of Eve's false show of virtue. In other words, when he listened to the words of Eve rather than to God, he subjected himself to unreason rather than reason and became, in effect, the first of the many courtly lovers of legend and fact who hymned the praises of their "proud fair." In Paradise Regained, Satan tempts Christ with the "Harmonious Airs" of chivalry (suggested by the allusions to "Fairy Damsels" and knights of Arthurian legend) yet Christ, unlike Adam, rejects them as "no gifts but guiles" (II, 391).

Because Christ represents the divinely inspired creative will that shapes the universe into an ordered system, he is an archetype for Orpheus, the divinely inspired poet-musician who tries to find order in the universe with his lyre or harp. In Book III of Paradise Lost Milton refers to the "Orphean Lyre" (17) as the instrument which

is by nature opposed to the disorganized turmoil of Chaos; and in Book VII, Orpheus is the bard whose harp and voice could lift inanimate nature "to rapture" before they were drowned by the "savage clamor" of the Bacchantes (32-37). Bacchus is, of course, a musician like Orpheus (in his Sixth Elegy Milton says that "on the Aonian hills the chorus of the Nine has often mingled with the rout of Thyoneous")¹¹ yet his music is an expression of discord and therefore destructive.

In "At a Vacation Exercise" the music of Apollo, a poet-musician like Orpheus, is contrasted with the discordant music of "green-ey'd Neptune [who] raves/In Heav'ns defiance" (43-4). The music of Satan and the other rebel angels sets the pattern for both the music of Neptune and the other varieties of discord which manifest themselves throughout the fallen world. In Book V of Paradise Lost, Milton says that with the coming of night in Heaven some of the angels sing the praise of God, "but not so wak'd/Satan" (657-8). Because Satan does not sing with the other angels he brings an unnatural note into the harmony of Heaven, and the revolt which ensues is an expression of discord in its most horrifying dimensions. When Raphael gives Adam an account of the battle in Heaven, he tells him how

storming furie rose,
 And clamour such as heard in Heav'n till now
 Was never, Arms on Armour clashing brayd
 Horrible discord, and the madding Wheelles
 Of brazen Chariots rag'd; dire was the noise
 Of conflict.

(VI, 207-12).

The severe rhythmical motion of the angels who dance before the throne of God is disturbed as well as the music of Heaven. When Satan surprises Michael with his newly-invented artillery the dance of the singing angels, which at one time merely seemed irregular, has now become irregular in fact. In superbly contemptuous lines Satan mocks his adversaries who

Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
 As they would dance, yet for a dance they seemd
 Somewhat extravagant and wilde.

(VI, 614-16).

From the point of view of the fallen angels, the revolt in Heaven brings discord even into the voice of God. They hear him "bellow through the vast and boundless Deep" (I, 177); in their present state of defeat he is the victor "whom Thunder hath made greater" (I, 258), and in future times he will be "Jehovah thundring out of Sion" (I, 386), exacting retribution on the sinful nations of the world. The discordant voice of God will continue to sound in the ears of fallen angels and fallen man until the Last Judgment when harmony is restored.

When Christ defeats the rebel angels harmony is restored to the precincts of Heaven. Hell, on the other hand, receives the rebel angels and amplifies their music. In Book I of Paradise Lost

we could hear Satan's music of discord reverberating through the gloom when the rebel angels

fierce with grasped Arms
Clasht on thir sounding shields the din of warr,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav'n
(667-9),

and when Satan returns to Pandemonium with news of his success in precipitating the fall of Adam and Eve, there is a "dreadful. . . din/Of hissing through the Hall" (X, 521-2), an affirmation of discord's triumph over concord.

In Hell, of course, discord occasionally resolves itself into melodies which are pleasing to the ear and, because the fallen angels try to work as a unit even though they are separated through pride, these melodies give birth to harmony. The fallen angels march "to the Dorian mood"--a mode which Milton, like Plato, associates with temperance and a well-ordered life--yet, ironically, their harmonious music is played on "Flutes and soft Recorders" (I, 551), Lydian instruments which Milton likes to associate with greed and the rustic dances of Bacchanalian revellers.¹² In "Comus," the melody of the flute blends with the sounds "of Riot, and ill manag'd Merriment" (172); and in "Lycidas," the songs of the corrupt clergy "grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched straw" (124). Discord is metamorphosed into harmony once more in the construction of Pandemonium. When the fallen angels build Pandemonium they create a temple out of music:

Anon out of the earth a Fabrick huge
 Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound
 Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet.
 (I, 710-12).

There is harmony and beauty here--Pandemonium has risen out of the earth as music rises out of the sound-boards of an organ--yet it is an expression of Satan's destructive pride. A false appearance of order has been created out of discord. Pandemonium is the first of many magnificent efforts to create an illusory kind of beauty. In the world after the Fall, the Tower of Babel--an ectype of Pandemonium--is built, yet the "hubbub strange" of its builders moves Heaven to laughter (XII, 60).

When dealing with Satan as the destructive principle, Milton frequently uses references to water and wind as appropriate symbols. Like the music of Satan, the sounds of the sea and the wind can ravish the ears of the listener and pull him into a destructive madness. Comus, who is the first of Milton's magnificent Satanic figures, talks about the music of his mother, Circe, which could pacify the waves of the raging sea:

I have oft heard
 My Mother Circe with the Sirens three,
 Amidst the flowry-kirtl'd Naiades
 Culling their potent hearbs, and balefull drugs,
 Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
 And lap it in Elysium, Scylla wept,
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause:
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
 And in sweet madnes rob'd it of it self.
 (252-61).

Circe's music is the music of magic or illusion which dulls the senses with a "sweet madnes." To fall under the spell of the murmuring cadences of her enchanted waters is to invite disaster from the rocks of Scylla and the whirlpool of Charybdis. In Book II of Paradise Lost, Milton uses the same kind of aural images to foreshadow the eating of the apple in Paradise and the fall into discord. The fallen angels applaud Mammon

as when hollow Rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had rous'd the Sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Sea-faring men orewatcht, whose Bark by chance
Or Pinnacle anchors in a craggy Bay
After the Tempest.

(285-90).

Like the rebel angels who filled Heaven with the sounds of "Horrible discord," the winds here are potentially destructive and capable of rousing the sea into discord. Yet the "sea-faring men" have been lulled by the sound of their "hoarse cadence." The reference to the rocks carries a suggestion of future havoc and desolation. Milton emphasizes the fact that the rocks are "hollow," and in doing so gives his simile the added suggestion that the voices of the fallen angels are also hollow. Although their voices can charm the ear, they are without substance and give only a false appearance of reality. Milton always associates the daemonic with hollowness. In the "Nativity Ode" Apollo, who here represents the false god speaking from the deceptive oracle rather than the divinely-inspired musician, leaves Delphos with a "hollow shriek;" and in Book I of Paradise Lost, Milton

suggests that there is a marked lack of substance in the voice of Satan who "call'd so loud, that all the hollow deeps/Of Hell resounded" (314-5).

In the daemonic world the dance degenerates into a sensual rite. Milton compares the fallen angels to dancing "Faerie Elves" who charm the ear with their "jocond Music" yet inspire fear in the heart of the onlooker (I, 781-88). In its more horrifying aspect, the sensual rite turns into a cannibalistic orgy, as in Milton's reference to the Night-Hag who

. . . comes
Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland Witches.
(II, 663-5).

In the devouring world of total bestiality there is no order at all. Brutal self-aggrandizement has completely disrupted the harmonious unity of the dance as it existed in the unfallen Garden. However, like the music of the fallen angels, the dance can be deceptive as it is with Comus and his followers who "imitate the Starry Quire" in their midnight revels (112).

Although appearance may prove to be deceptive in the daemonic world there is no such illusion in Chaos. Chaos corresponds to the discordant elements in the universe which God has not yet resolved into order; therefore it is outside of time and harmony. Form is shattered because the personified power who rules over this realm of confusion "by decision more imbroiles the fray" (II, 908). Although he is not able to control Chaos, Satan manages to pass through

it in his journey to Paradise because he is impelled by an idea which gives him purpose and direction. When he reaches the outer limits of confusion where Chaos begins

. . .to retire
As from her outmost works a brok'n foe
With tumult less and with less hostile din
(II, 1038-40),

he leaves a world of total discord and enters a world of harmony. Yet in this world of harmony he is merely a "false dissembler" (III, 681) because he brings the seeds of discord in his proud defiance of God's will.

After the Fall, Adam and Eve begin to experience the break up of harmony. Like the "sea-faring men" who have been hypnotized by the "hoarse cadence" of the winds, they have heard the voice of Satan, and their fate will be the same--they will be overwhelmed by the destructive element:

They sate them down to weep, nor onely Teares
Raind at thir Eyes, but high Winds worse within
Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,
Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord, and shook sore
Thir inward state of mind, calme Region once
And full of Peace, now tost and turbulent.
(IX, 1121-6).

The fallen world which Adam and Eve must enter after their sin is one of discord and deceit. Michael shows Adam a vision of the future where "the brazen Throat of Warr" (XI, 713) and the "soft amorous Ditties" of dancing women (XI, 584) mock the ordered harmony of the unfallen Garden. Like the "River-dragon" (XII, 191) and the ante-diluvian world "devote to universal rack" (XI, 821), man will be

engulfed by the destructive element unless he can rise out of his debased condition and repent his sins. Through prayer, repentance and obedience, harmony can be restored. Immediately after the Fall, Adam, who is "in a troubl'd Sea of passion tost" (X, 718), prays to God and God listens:

Methought I saw him placable and mild,
Bending his eare.

(XI, 151-2).

Through prayer God will listen to man and place within him his "Umpire Conscience" to guide him towards the light of reason. Through reason the music of the turning spheres will once more sound in his ears.

Because the fallen world is filled with illusion and false shows of virtue, temptation becomes a fact of life. The dark forest in "Comus" is one of "calling shapes" and "airy tongues, that syllable mens names" (207-8), and in Paradise Regained the "fair speech" of Satan sounds in the ears of Christ. However, temptation is overcome through right reason. The Lady, who sees that Comus is nothing more than a "false traitor" (690), comes out of the dark forest "to triumph in victorious dance/O're sensual Folly, and Intemperance" (974-5). Satan shows Christ a vision of Athens where he can hear "Aeolian charms and Dorian Lyric Odes" (IV, 257), yet Christ rejects Satan's temptation because, although the music may sound noble and impressive, the doctrine is perverted:

they loudest sing
 The vices of thir Deities, and thir own
 In Fable, Hymn, or Song, so personating
 Thir Gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
 (IV, 339-42).

Christ triumphs over the folly of unreality and hears choirs of angels singing "Heav'nly Anthems of his victory" (IV, 594), but Satan falls to await "the terror of [God's] voice" (IV, 627).

The temptation motif which runs through Milton's poetry is frequently associated with music because Milton was aware of the fact that nothing can serve as a better force to hamper our reasoning minds than the emotive powers of music. Music is perhaps the most highly sensuous art form there is because of its directness and immediacy. When this immediacy is combined with the intensity and force of drama, the mind can be stimulated to a high pitch of emotional excitement which is almost hypnotic. In Milton's view, an excess of emotion debases rather than strengthens character, therefore Satan's music of discord or romantic exuberance is essentially a false kind of rapture. It is music of the ego, an expression of the virtuoso temperament that is by nature hostile to form, unity and symmetry, the intellectual ingredients of music. The music of Heaven, like all music, also has its appeal to the emotions, yet it is tempered by a unity of melodic, rhythmic and harmonic elements that involves intellectual abilities of a high order. In contrast to Satan's music of pathos, it is an expression of the sublime where dignity of expression disciplines and restrains the primitive instincts of the mind.

CHAPTER III

MILTON'S AUDITORY IMAGINATION - PART II

When Eliot talks about Milton's auditory imagination, he concentrates his attention on syntax rather than on meaningful references to sound and music which form part of a superstructure of images. In dealing with Milton's poetry, then--and this is particularly true of Paradise Lost--we have to investigate those peculiarities in verbal structure which give rise to a musical style. Once we have arrived at a suitable definition of musical poetry we can ask ourselves if Eliot is justified in making such a large issue out of the problem at hand.

In his introductory note to Paradise Lost, Milton says that the narrative or dramatic poem of heroic proportions should dispense with rhyme because it is "trivial and of no true musical delight," and he goes on to say that "musical delight" consists of "the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another." This defence of the style of Paradise Lost is illuminating because it shows us how a poet's mind can be disposed to see things from a musician's point of view. If a musician were to comment on that sustained and varied rhythmic impulse in music which pulls smaller units of sound, con-

tained within bar lines and governed by a time signature, into larger units of sound which constitute a melodic phrase, he would use musical terminology to explain his position, yet he would undoubtedly reason things out the same way. Like a musician, Milton does not submit himself to the tyranny of self-sufficient units of sound (as Pope does, for example, when he employs the heroic couplet). His verse is built on the iambic pentameter line, yet each line spills over into the following line in a continuous flow of sound which proceeds "variously" or with rhythmic variety.¹ Stress and continuity are important to him above everything else and this is why his poetry has a peculiar kind of energy which is, in the best sense of the word, musical.

Eliot strikes at the heart of Milton's style when he talks about "the complication of a Miltonic sentence. . .for the sake of musical value."² In an effort to maintain a continuous flow of sound, Milton will often distort grammar to the point where his sentences seem to be unnatural in their construction. Eliot is, of course, out of sympathy with this practice. It is precisely what disturbs him in his criticism of the following speech by Satan:

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Vertues, Powers,
 If these magnific Titles yet remain
 Not meerly titular, since by Decree
 Another now hath to himself ingross't
 All Power, and us eclips'd under the name
 Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
 Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
 This onely to consult how we may best
 With what may be devis'd of honours new
 Receive him coming to receive from us

Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
 Too much to one, but double how endur'd,
 To one and to his image now proclaimed?
 (V, 772-84).

"The syntax," says Eliot, "is determined by the musical significance."³ This is quite true. Milton uses odd-sounding connectives like "for whom" and "this onely" to bind his thought together into one continuous flow of sound. It is not strictly the connectives, however, which help to maintain the continuity of sound in this particular passage. Milton also employs assonance, alliteration and the repetition of words and phrases (the "to one" repetition in the last two lines, for example). The rhythms are, of course, varied, and this gives rise to a kind of musical energy which contributes to the effect of continuity by throwing the reader's mind forward in anticipation of what is going to follow.

In order to understand why Milton developed a musical style for Paradise Lost we have to look back in time to an earlier period in his life. The youthful Milton was faced with a difficult problem when he contemplated writing his epic: what kind of style would be appropriate for a poem which, in many ways, was to be the first of its kind in the English language? As early as "At a Vacation Exercise," we find him thinking about this problem when he asks his "native Language" to

search thy coffers round,
 Before thou cloath my fancy in fit sound.
 (31-2).

He goes on to say that this "fit" style must enable the poet to transcend the bounds of both place and time. He must be able to soar as high as Heaven, descend as deep as the realm of "green-ey'd Neptune," and go as far back in time as the origins of life itself "when Beldam Nature in her cradle was" (33-46). Any style, then, which draws upon the rhythms of actual speech--and this would include the Shakespearean style--would be inappropriate because it would restrict the poet in place and time. What Milton had to do, in effect, was create a style of his own, a style which would be elevated in tone yet original.

In view of the difficulties anticipated in "At a Vacation Exercise," a musical style fitted the requirements of Milton's epic theme admirably. It gave Paradise Lost the uniqueness of expression necessary if characters and events were to be outside of place and time, because it was an individual style which owed little to the styles current during the seventeenth century or exploited by other poets before the seventeenth century. Leavis' remark that "Milton has forgotten the English language"⁴ is not without an element of truth. Furthermore, this musical style gave an English epic the sustained elevation of tone it needed. At least one of Milton's contemporaries, Andrew Marvell, was quite willing to concede that this was one of the marks of the greatness of Paradise Lost:

The Bird nam'd from that Paradise you sing
So never flags, but always keeps on Wing.⁵

Yet even if we are prepared to take the stand that Milton was quite successful in overcoming the basic difficulties which arose out of the theme of his epic, Eliot's question--does Milton's style distract the reader's attention from the sense of the poem?--remains unanswered. This question is of utmost importance, especially if we take into consideration a passage, like the one quoted earlier in this chapter, where there is almost nothing at all for the mind to fasten on in terms of imagery.

If a poet shows an influence from music in his poetry there are often marked similarities between his style and the theories of music which were propagated during his lifetime. When dealing with Milton's poetry, then, we should not overlook the possibility that his auditory imagination was to some extent influenced by the musical thought of his own time. We know that he always maintained a keen interest in the latest developments in music. In his Defensio Secunda he tells us that during his stay in Horton he occasionally went to London "either for the sake of purchasing books, or of learning something new in mathematics or in music."⁶ One of the most interesting comments on Milton's musical interests comes from his nephew and biographer, Edward Phillips, who says that while the poet was in Venice during his tour of the continent, he "Shipp'd up a Parcel of curious and rare Books which he had pick'd up in his Travels; particularly a Chest or two of choice Musick-books of the best Masters

flourishing about that time in Italy, namely Luca Marenzo, Monte Verde, Horatio Vecchi, Cifa, the Prince of Venosa, and several others."⁷ The Italian composers who caught the fancy of the young poet were beginning to come under the influence of the Nuove Musiche, a new style of vocal music which called for a true and exact representation of the mood of the text as a whole. This new style was essentially a reaction against an earlier practice of imitating the external qualities of nature by fitting a particular word or group of words in a song to suggestive melodic, harmonic and rhythmic effects.⁸ Milton was certainly in a position to be strongly influenced by both of these schools of thought, and we can perhaps throw some light on the nature of his auditory imagination if we keep this in mind.⁹

In the "Apostrophe to Light," which opens the third book of Paradise Lost, Milton talks about his nightly visit to "Sion" where he can "feed on thoughts, that voluntarie move/Harmonious numbers" (37-8). What he seems to be saying here is that the thoughts of a poem must make themselves vivid through patterns of sound. When we read Paradise Lost we find that Milton puts his theory into practice, and he does this by engrafting into a poetic medium the two conflicting attitudes to sound which were a subject of debate amongst the musicians of his time. A continuous flow of sound, the active energy of the divinely-inspired poet, reshapes itself into smaller blocks

of sound which suggest internal or external modes of existence.¹⁰ These smaller blocks of sound exist in their own right, yet they are also an inseparable part of the whole. What we have, then, is a poetic style which admits variety yet preserves unity. Because Milton is capable of using sound to his advantage this way, his emphasis on the auditory seems to be a virtue rather than a defect. In order to demonstrate why this is so it will be necessary to re-emphasize some of the problems he was faced with when he decided to write Paradise Lost.

Heaven and Hell are outside of the universe as we know it because they represent the external world as it appears either to a totally enlightened mind or to a totally depraved mind. In his description of Heaven, Milton could give only the barest suggestion of a visual landscape because in Heaven the eye has to expand over an unlimited area where individualized forms become part of a totality which is God or, in metaphorical terms, light. Hell, on the other hand, is a place of "darkness visible" where unity is absent, in spite of appearance; therefore the eye has to see things from a blurred perspective. In his treatment of Heaven and Hell, then, Milton could do nothing more than use visual imagery sparingly at crucial points in his narrative. Where this visual element was not emphasized he had to use sound as an imitative device to render the external attributes of nature and thereby reinforce the sense of his poetry, or else he had to use sound to suggest internal states of

mind. But, because some critics seem to have appallingly insensitive ears for sound, Milton's style has been dismissed as nothing more than "magniloquence" or "rhetoric" in which sound is exploited for its own sake only.

Because Milton has to see things from both daemonic and divine perspectives, his imitations of external nature resolve themselves into a number of different "speaking landscapes." These "speaking landscapes" express their own degree of perfection or imperfection, yet they also express the status of fallen and unfallen beings on the great chain that leads up to God. The archetype of the divine landscape is Heaven, the limit of harmonious order in creation. This landscape speaks of its different varieties of perfection in an audible hymn of praise to the Father, and because praise is a spontaneous act of love, Milton uses as a medium for his imitative effects a style predominantly lyrical and without any extravagance of rhythm or tone. An excellent example of Milton's imitative lyricism is in Book III of Paradise Lost where a description of the heavenly landscape revolves around one central image, the incorruptible flower, Amarant, that

there grows,

And flours aloft shading the Fount of Life,
 And where the river of Bliss through midst of Heavn
 Rowls ore Elisian Flours her Amber stream;
 With these that never fade the Spirits Elect
 Bind thir resplendant locks inwreath'd with beams,
 Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
 Pavement that like a Sea of Jasper shon
 Impurpl'd with Celestial Roses smil'd.

(356-64).

These lines seem to flow with effortless ease, and at the same time everything in the landscape expresses the perfection that is natural to itself. The Amarant "flours aloft" with a rising rhythm, it becomes a "shading" flower and the rhythm falls, and the "river of Bliss" flows "through midst of Heavn" in a liquid rise and fall of cadences. In the last few lines of the passage tone is emphasized rather than rhythm, and the thick-sounding consonants create an effect of richness. Milton's verse never sags, however, because a liberal use of front vowels counteracts the downward pull of the consonants and leaves us with a sense of weightless opulence. It is interesting that in another passage in Book III of Paradise Lost, Milton exploits tone to create a similar effect of richness in his verse, and at the end of this passage he emphasizes the difficulty he was faced with in his treatment of the landscape of Heaven. Satan, in his journey to Paradise, sees the wall of Heaven where

thick with sparkling orient Gemmes
The Portal shon, inimitable on Earth
By Model, or by shading Pencil drawn.
(507-9).

Milton knows that he cannot emphasize the visual in his description of the gates of Heaven because they are "inimitable on Earth," therefore, he uses sound to define rather than the artist's "shading Pencil." The gates of Heaven literally speak of their perfection as the Great Gate of Kiev does, for example, in Moussorgsky's impressionistic work, "Pictures at an Exhibition."

The unfallen Garden is only one step below the divine and again nature expresses, with spontaneous exuberance, its perfection that is in harmony with God's will. In the "Hymn of Praise" pronounced by Adam and Eve in Book V (ll. 153-208), the landscape is described as either a moving or a speaking landscape which praises God with the variety of its many parts. The mists rise and fall, the winds "breathe soft or loud," the trees and plants "in sign of Worship wave," and the moving waters "warbling tune his praise." Milton never misses a chance to use tone-painting to define the nature of this landscape, even though it offers more for the eye than Heaven or Hell. The streams that issue from the "Saphire Fount," for example, swell into life in lyrical cadences like the "river of Bliss" in Heaven:

Rowling on Orient Pearl and sands of Gold.
(IV, 237-8).

In a beautiful imitation of renewed life striving to release itself into form, an initial spondee is followed by iambic rhythms which speed up the line:

Powrd forth profuse on Hill and Dale and Plaine.
(IV, 243).

However, at times Milton's verse is weighted down with a strong emphasis on back vowels and thick, heavy consonants. This is particularly true of some of the lines which imitate the vegetable life of Paradise:

Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gumms and Balme,
 Others whose fruit burnisht with Gold'n Rinde
 Hung amiable, Hesperian Fables true,
 If true, here onely, and of delicious taste.
 (IV, 248-51).

Milton's verse slows down here, and words like "Gumms," "Balme," "burnisht" and "delicious" literally make the mouth water with their promise of abundance. This kind of tone-painting is quite appropriate because, as Eve points out in Book IX of Paradise Lost, Paradise is beginning to feel the weight of "wanton growth" (l. 211). Because Adam and Eve have free will this element of imperfection in the landscape serves as a test for their free will, as Satan realizes. When Satan tempts Eve he tries to focus her attention on the abundance of Paradise and in turn appeal to her latent desire for excess. It is an appeal to the appetites and the passions rather than to reason.

In the world of Satan freedom has no meaning because the energy of Satan's will either falls into a state of lassitude or else becomes an agent of the passions to resolve itself into different varieties of force acting against the will of God. Milton's daemonic landscape becomes an expression of inertia or mechanical revolt and as a result his verse is either slow-moving or impelled by nervous energy. When Satan is lying on the "Lake of Fire" and not yet active, the landscape is described as a region of sluggish inactivity where

darkness visible
 Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe,
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all.

(I, 63-67).

The rhythms are appropriately slow-moving here, and the repeated back vowels give an added sense of heaviness. When Satan is active, on the other hand, the landscape becomes active in turn and Milton's verse struggles. The opening of the Gates of Hell, which represents the liberation of evil energy, is bodied forth in harsh and brittle tones:

on a sudden op'n flie
With impetuous recoile and jarring sound
Th' infernal dores, and on thir hinges grate
Harsh Thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus.

(II, 879-83).

Extravagant rhythmic effects and repeated "r" sounds in this passage give an effect of harshness and violence.¹¹ Madrigalists of the sixteenth century probably would have been very much impressed by this kind of tone-painting in poetry. "When you would express any words signifying hardness, cruelty, bitterness and other such like," says Thomas Morley, "make the harmony like unto it, that is somewhat harsh and hard, but yet so that it offend not."¹²

When Milton focuses our attention on the five rivers of Hell (II, 577-86), he uses sound to set up a beautiful contrast between active and inactive daemonic energy. In his allusion to "abhorred Styx the flood of deadly hate" his rhythms are forced and they push forward with an almost brutal insistence. When he refers to "sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep," on the other hand, his rhythms slow down and then fall under the weight of two heavy monosyllables to reach a momentary pause. We see this contrast repeated in the next

few lines. The slow-paced cadences which accompany the shift to "Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud" are followed by heavier stresses and an increase in rhythmic vitality in the reference to "fierce Phlegeton/Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage." Finally, Milton draws our attention to that part of Hell where "Lethe the River of Oblivion roules/Her watrie Labyrinth." Unlike the "river of Bliss" in Heaven, this is a sluggish stream. The repeated "o" vowels which seem to echo one another, an absence of heavy stresses, and the falling rhythms at the end of the phrase create an aural effect that is appropriate for these waters "which abolish care and give enduring release from memory."¹³

At times Milton focuses our attention on Satan rather than on the daemonic landscape which is a reflection of Satan's state of mind. In his description of Satan's journey through Chaos, for example, he creates an illusion of movement in space through subtle changes in both rhythm and tone. As the journey begins a rising rhythm and softened consonants give the effect of an unimpeded rising movement--

Uplifted spurns the ground (II, 929)

--but this is soon changed to a succession of short, quick syllables followed by heavy consonants and rhythms which give an effect of unequal or spent energy and subsequent descent:

Fluttring his pennons vain plumb down he drops.
(II, 933).

As Satan rises again the rhythms rise, however this time they take on a forceful and persistent pounding quality as some of the heavy stresses clash together:

So eagerly the Fiend
Ore bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet pursues his way
(ll. 947-9).

In the space of a few lines Milton captures the machine-like forcefulness of Satan's proud but shackled spirit. He does this chiefly through sound. The visual element is subordinated to the point where we have only a fleeting glimpse of a wing, a hand, or a foot, and this is as it should be. Sometimes Milton dispenses with visual references altogether, and his effect is totally one of sound. This is particularly true of his description of Satan's fall from Heaven:

Him the Almighty Power
Hurld headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantin Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.
(I, 44-49).

The yielding consonants and heavy, falling rhythms at the beginning of this passage give the effect of a violent downward thrust as if a huge body were falling from immeasurable heights. However, the closing lines, interspersed with hard consonants, arrest the downward movement and terminate the fall of the rebel angel. One is reminded of Morley's dictum: "where your ditty speaketh of 'descending,' 'lowness,' 'depth,' 'hell,' and others such you must make your music descend."¹⁴

In spite of the fact that Satan's world is a place where the passions have usurped reason and in turn isolated each one of the fallen angels from both God and his fellows, there is beauty in Hell because in brief moments of time unlikes fuse together, as they do in human history during brief periods of peace when the City of God seems to manifest itself on earth. The active daemonic world, then, is not simply a place of mechanical revolt, and at times Milton's imitative effects are engrafted into a medium that is lyrical in texture. This is particularly true of something like the description of Mulciber's fall from Heaven (I, 740-46) which should be contrasted with the description of Satan's fall quoted in the preceding paragraph. Mulciber is, of course, the architect of Pandaemonium; consequently Milton's description of the building of Pandaemonium becomes a daemonic parody of spontaneous self-expression. The magnificent structure seems to rise effortlessly out of the ground to speak of its own perfection:

Anon out of the earth a Fabrick huge
 Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound
 Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet:
 Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With Gold'n Architrave.

(I, 710-15).

There is something very beautiful in the sound of this passage. The rhythms of the first phrase rise with effortless ease to come to a rest with a slight fall at the end, and we have a sense of illuminated richness in the concluding lines where "o" vowels are alternated with "i" vowels. However, in the second phrase, where sibilants are re-

peated throughout, there is a hint of corruption, an echo of the seductive music of Circe in Comus. Satan's world, then, not only appears to be magnificent, but at times it ravishes the ear and draws the listener to itself.

The whispering kind of evil that seems to issue from Pandaemonium is, in fact, the harmonious music of the fallen angels. This is the only way the fallen angels can sing because they have been seduced by their own passions. Furthermore, since their energies are divided, their harmony can never remain a stable thing, and it must eventually break up into discord. This is precisely what happens when Satan returns to Pandaemonium after his successful mission to earth and hears "a dismal universal hiss" (X, 508) instead of the applause he expected. Here Milton uses unusual names to heighten the aural suggestiveness of his verse:

dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the Hall, thick swarming now
With complicated monsters, head and taile,
Scorpion and Asp, and Amphisbaena dire,
Cerastes hornd, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,
And Dipsas.

(X, 521-26).

Milton repeats sibilants as he did in his description of the building of Pandaemonium, yet vowels and hard consonants, which are varied as much as possible, give an effect of cacaphony. The beautiful turns into the grotesque as the seductive music becomes a "sound/Of public scorn" (X, 508-9).

Milton was much too great an artist to limit himself to a clever parodying of external nature and, like the Italian composers of the seventeenth century who identified themselves with the *Nuove Musiche*, he used sound to express the predominant emotions of his text. The earliest examples of this habit are the companion poems "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."¹⁵ When he decided to write Paradise Lost, Milton often had no alternative but to get inside the mind of his characters or his narrator. God, for example, is form without matter; therefore he cannot be described as a being with an objective reality. The only way that Milton could approach a definition of the Father was to have him speak in a flat language of statement, suggest his presence through vague and generalized visual images, or else suggest through sound that state of mind peculiar to a person who feels the presence of God inside himself. Milton tries all these alternatives but he is most successful with the third one. In the following passage we find him using sound patterns to give his verse the emotional overtones it needs:

Thee Father first they sung Omnipotent,
 Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
 Eternal King; thee Author of all being,
 Fountain of Light, thy self invisible
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
 Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant Shrine,
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appeer,
 Yet dazle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil thir eyes.
 (III, 372-82).

This piece of writing is an astonishing technical achievement because the skillfully ordered patterns of sound invoke a mood that approaches the trance-like state of mystical ecstasy. Milton gives his verse a light, ethereal tone by repeating front vowels and soft consonants at regular intervals. However, there is also a sense of elemental power throughout, and Milton creates this effect by interspersing hard consonants at intervals in a fashion which could be described as contrapuntal. Heavy "b" sounds are picked up in the third line, repeated, and then alternated with heavy "d" sounds until the final line where they are repeated once more. Everything contributes to the poet's sense of being "rapt above the Pole" (VII, 23).

What we have to realize when we read the passage just quoted is that Milton is trying to use sound to show us a particular state of mind. Feeling is more important here than idea; consequently, when we read this passage, we do not have the impression that the sense has escaped us. There is in fact a "dissociation of sensibility" in Milton's treatment of Heaven, but it resolves itself into two poetic styles instead of one. One of these styles finds expression in the narrator's voice and the other finds expression in the voice of God. God represents abstract reason; therefore, whenever Milton has an "idea to convey which he regards as important" he puts it into the mouth of God who speaks in a flat language where sound is suppressed in favour of thought.¹⁶ The voice of the narrator, on the other hand, becomes an expression of that creative energy which is released when

the mind is one with God.

It is significant that Eliot extracts a passage from one of Satan's speeches as an example of Milton's habit of overemphasizing the auditory in his poetry. God's speeches are closer to the flat language of prose and therefore intelligible. Yet the sense of Satan's speeches sometimes eludes the reader because sound is emphasized to the point where the reader willingly or unwillingly focuses most of his attention on the sound. We have to agree with Eliot to a point then and say that there is in fact a "dissociation of sensibility" in some parts of Paradise Lost. Yet in spite of the fact that this "dissociation of sensibility" is present, it does not have to be regarded as a defect in Milton's vision, because Satan has to dissociate sense from sound if he wants to be a successful devil. Action for Satan means a negative or destructive act; therefore his reasons for acting have to be negative themselves. However, a negative argument is not a good argument because it turns back on itself and dismisses any possibility of a positive gain. In order to argue successfully, then, Satan has to spellbind his victims with a kind of verbal magic which dulls the rational faculties to the point where they will be in danger of accepting an irrational argument as a statement of truth. Magniloquence becomes, in effect, a verbal mask which makes the irrational appear to be rational. If Milton had toned down his music and made it easy for the reader to follow the workings of Satan's mind, he would have destroyed Satan's effectiveness as a dramatic character capable of misleading his victims.

In the temptation of Eve, Milton gives us an extended illustration of how Satan's magic works. There are three phases to this temptation. The first is an appeal to Eve's vanity, the second is an appeal to her appetites, and the third is a questioning of the wisdom of God and an extenuation of the merits of man. In the first two phases, where sound and sense complement each other, Satan does not rationalize. He simply prepares Eve for the third and final phase where his rhetoric gives his rationalizing an appearance of truth. When Satan directs his appeal to Eve's vanity his words take on a warm emotional tone. He does not have to be a rhetorician here because he simply wants to focus Eve's attention on her own beauty:

Fairest resemblance of thy Maker faire,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy Celestial Beautie adore
With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
Where universally admir'd.

(IX, 538-42).

Satan's pleasing words are enough to awaken a consciousness of self in the mind of Eve because, as Milton points out, "into the Heart of Eve his words made way" (IX, 550).¹⁷ His next act is to focus her attention on the weight of excess that surrounds her, and the warm emotional tone of his voice becomes an aural imitation of the deliciousness of Paradise itself:

from the boughes a savorie odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleas'd my sense
Then smell of sweetest Fenel, or the Teats
Of Ewe or Goat dropping with Milk at Eevn,
Unsuckt of Lamb or Kid, that tend thir play.

(IX, 579-83).

Satan is not trying to argue with Eve here. He is merely directing her awakened consciousness of self outwards by appealing to her appetites. The appetites in turn arouse the passions and, in the epic simile which follows, Eve is appropriately described as an "amaz'd Night-wanderer" misled by "a wandring Fire" (IX, 634-42). Up to this point Eve's will has not been usurped by her passions because she still resists Satan with the retort that "Reason is our Law" (IX, 654). However, her will has been misled by her passions to the point where she might condescend to listen to an irrational argument. This argument constitutes the third phase of the temptation, and it is here that Satan works his most powerful magic on Eve's mind. In the epic simile which sets the stage for what is to follow, Satan is described as an "Orator" (IX, 670-76); Milton is reminding us that we can expect to hear rhetoric rather than "actual speech." This piece of rhetoric, which begins as a panegyric on the Tree of Knowledge, is loaded with contradictions and statements which are quite obviously false if we take a look beneath the passionate flow of words.¹⁸ Eve, of course, is misled by appearance. Satan's "shew of Zeale and Love/To Man" (IX, 665-6) intoxicates her reason to the point where she unwittingly accepts an irrational argument as a statement of truth. As the narrator points out,

in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his perswasive words, impregnd
With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth.
(IX, 736-38).

Those passions which were awakened earlier, momentarily usurp the will and become the springboard for an irrational act of self-indulgence when Eve eats from the Tree of Knowledge.

Satan's verbal magic usually follows the same kind of pattern that is typified in his temptation of Eve. He directs his appeal to the emotions first and then, as he begins to rationalize, the tone of his voice rises to a pitch of greater emotional intensity and sound becomes dissociated from sense. This is precisely what happens in the passage which Eliot quoted in his first essay on Milton. The first line--"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Vertues, Powers"--constitutes merely an appeal for attention and it is in a heralding rhythm which is appropriate. However, the next three phrases, which end with falling rhythms, initiate a mood of despair calculated to draw the rebel angels into themselves.¹⁹

If these magnific Titles yet remain
Not meerly titular, since by Decree
Another now hath to himself ingross't
All Power, and us eclipst under the name
Of King anointed.

(V, 773-77).

In the second part of Satan's speech Milton speeds up his rhythms and the clauses, which end with rising rhythms, lead to a crashing crescendo:

for whom all this haste
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
This onely to consult how we may best
With what may be devis'd of honours new
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
Too much to one, but double how endur'd,
To one and to his image now proclaimed?

(V, 777-84).

The greater resolve and determination of Satan becomes almost totally an expression of sound, and unless we exercise all our powers of concentration on these concluding lines we find that we are carried along with the sound.

Although Milton's theme of false appearance is powerfully expressed in Satan's deceptive rhetoric, we have to realize that this theme is consistent throughout the whole of Paradise Lost. We can be misled by appearance, for example, if we admire Pandaemonium, the music of the fallen angels, or Satan's magnificent bulk. Milton's place names often constitute a test for the reader. If we look at the well-known passage (quoted in Chapter I) which Eliot singled out as typical of "an occasional levity" that a "concentration upon the auditory imagination leads to,"²⁰ we find that this is the case. Michael shows Adam the kingdoms of the world stretching from

Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temirs Throne,
To Paquin of Sinaean Kings, and thence
To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul
Down to the gold'n Chersonese, or where
The Persion in Ecbatan sate, or since
In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar
In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,
Turchestan-born.

(XI, 388-96).

Eliot is right, of course, when he says that there is an absence of seriousness in the tone of the poet's voice here. However, it was undoubtedly Milton's intention to modulate his tone this way because he realized that life can be viewed as an absurd comedy, especially

if the viewer is looking at it from a distance. The place names referred to evoke visions of oriental splendour and power, a world where men live by "the letter, or external law" rather than "the inward law of God."²¹ In this kind of world human activity is like a "solemn game" because it eventually proves futile even though it may appear to be purposeful. Milton sees no reason to dwell on this part of his narrative for any length of time and he waves it aside with the comment that "to nobler sights/Michael from Adams eyes the Filme remov'd" (XI, 411-12). However, it is possible to take the tone as well as the substance of this passage seriously if one's mind is disposed to see the absurd as important. To those who involve themselves in a "solemn game" absurdity can be the same thing as solemnity. Because Eliot sees a certain "levity" in this passage he obviously has no inclination to involve himself; therefore he has not been misled by appearance.

Because Paradise Lost was written with the reader in mind, and his ability to select what is either right or wrong, we have to approach it with a certain amount of caution. If we do this we will find that through a heavy emphasis on sound, an emphasis which occasionally leads to a "dissociation of sensibility," Milton created a unique style that has the flexibility to include a number of different ethical positions. If we fail to do this we will undoubtedly accuse Milton of a want of subtlety, and the meaning of Paradise Lost will not be easily accessible to the imagination.

CONCLUSION

When we read Paradise Lost, or any of Milton's poems for that matter, we have to realize that Milton is essentially a didactic poet who tries to order experience or pull it into a meaningful context. It is of the poet and his theology that we must think finally. Because Eliot has admitted that he is out of sympathy with Milton's theology, we feel that his inability to appreciate Paradise Lost "outside of the mazes of sound"¹ is due in part to his own subconscious desire to ignore the argument of the poem. We feel that he is perhaps quite willing to focus his attention on sound because today it is "considered. . .grotesque, on moral grounds, to be of the party of the Puritans."² But if a reader of Milton wants to have a full appreciation of Paradise Lost he has to be mentally prepared to submerge himself in the argument of the poem. Once he has the right mental attitude he will realize that visual and aural images are worked into the thematic tapestry of the poem.

Even though Eliot seems to have been much too severe in his attack on Milton's visual imagination, he is right when he says that Milton's imagination is predominantly auditory. Yet because he seems to think that the music of Paradise Lost is "especially refractory to yielding up its secrets to examination of the single line,"³ we

feel that again he has failed to give his full concentration to the poem. When we read the poem we find that subtle shifts in rhythm and tone stand out as individualized units within larger patterns of sound, and like Milton's visual images they are consistent with the meaning of the poem. Milton's ability to give variety as well as unity to his patterns of sound is one of the outstanding marks of his genius, and it is undoubtedly this which has drawn so many musicians to his poetry.⁴

In spite of the fact that Milton's theology provides a firm substructure for his images and aural effects, the style of Paradise Lost is, for the most part, connotative rather than denotative. Visual images illuminate the poet's argument, yet they are consistently used as instruments of implication to suggest rather than explain in terms of a one-to-one relationship. The real effectiveness of Milton's connotative style, however, depends upon emphasis on the aural. Sound can suggest external modes of existence, but it can never become an instrument of direct statement. It can energize the world of Paradise Lost and in turn initiate a response from our muscles and our ear, but it tends to blur distinctions because it is more closely associated with feelings and emotions than with ideas. We must remember, then, that although it is right that the reader should try to measure the characters and events in Paradise Lost against Milton's theology, sound is the controlling stylistic element which gives him room to exercise his imagination.

When we speak of Milton's auditory imagination we have to realize that in terms of the period and paragraph structure of Paradise Lost it gives rise to a style which is both sustained in tone and unique in English literature. Eliot seems to have been attracted to the sustained patterns of sound in Milton's poetry and, although he does not go so far as to say that they are appropriate for an epic, he implies as much when he says that they give "almost a physical sensation of a breathless leap."⁵ Yet he fails to realize that the divinely-inspired narrator and the characters in Paradise Lost must speak in a unique language because it is not their nature to think the way we do. A musical style is appropriate as well as unique. Because the minds of Milton's epic characters are more nearly disposed to an unchanging perspective than our minds, thoughts are expressed in long, sustained patterns of sound which reflect an immediate and energetic response to experience. Furthermore, thoughts are generally unfolded in a sequence in keeping with the actual flow of experience because, since the characters in Paradise Lost have a clearer understanding of their status in the universe than we do, they do not have to reason things out with too many "intricacies and by-paths of mental movement."⁶ Because this is so, we feel that, for the most part, Milton's style has simplicity as well as energy.

Although Eliot may be guilty of failing to read Milton seriously or with consideration for the unique thought processes typical of characters dissimilar in nature and remote in time and place from ourselves, he does have some justice on his side. It is true that

when Milton dissociates sense from sound he is a difficult poet to read. But we have to realize that Milton wrote this way because his view of life dictated that this was the way he must write. Milton believed that because truth is often a hidden quantity in a world governed by deceit, man has to go through a diligent and exhausting search to find it. Nowhere does he express this idea more eloquently than in Areopagitica:

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the Virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scatter'd them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them.⁷

Because Paradise Lost is in part a poem about Satan, who is one of the "wicked race of deceivers," the reader has to put himself in the place of Isis or one of the "sad friends of Truth." When he listens to Satan's rhetoric he has to exercise an exceptional amount of care in his search and his rational faculties have to be strained to the point of exhaustion. If he manages to get beneath the surface of Satan's personality he will find that Milton has a great deal to say about the world of today, but if he gives up early with nothing to show for his limited endeavours but an appreciation for Milton's "ability to work in larger musical units than any other poet,"⁸ he will blind himself to the mind of a great poet.

Summing up, we may say that although Milton has something to say to the twentieth century world, his true greatness lies in a poetic style which is in keeping with the remoteness of his epic theme and his view of life. It is an emphasis on sound which is the most remarkable and distinctive feature of this "fit" style. Sound energizes Milton's poetry and in turn excites the mind of the reader, illuminating his understanding and enriching his sense of active involvement with elemental passions and forces deeply rooted in physical nature and human nature. One of Sir Thomas Browne's comments on music could be applied to Paradise Lost as well: "it is an Hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole World, and creatures of God; such a melody to the ear, as the whole World well understood, would afford the understanding."⁹

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

¹See "Milton I," in On Poetry and Poets, 158, 161.

²Although Eliot does not use this phrase in "Milton I," it is mentioned in "Milton II," an essay written in 1947. For a more detailed discussion of the "dissociation of sensibility" see Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," in Selected Essays, 267-277.

³"Milton I," 161.

⁴Milton's Imagery, 108, 124, 130-134.

⁵The Miltonic Setting, 98.

⁶See Banks, Milton's Imagery, 167; Nock, "Denis Saurat on Milton's Colour Vision," MLN, XLII (1927), 150.

⁷"The Nature of Metaphysical Poetry," in Collected Essays, 84.

⁸See "Milton's Verse," in Revaluation, 42-67.

⁹See "Milton II," in On Poetry and Poets, 165-183.

¹⁰Ezra Pound seems to think that the visual element in Paradise Lost, such as it is, is a defect. "Milton," he says, "has no grasp of the superhuman. Milton's angels are men of enlarged power, plus wings. Dante's angels surpass human nature and differ from it. They move in their high courses inexplicable." (The Spirit of Romance, 157.)

¹¹Paradise Lost in Our Time, 16-17, 91-93.

¹²"Milton and Poussin," Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson, 209.

¹³The Miltonic Setting, 103.

¹⁴Four Stages of Renaissance Style, 212.

¹⁵Carl Jung, in Modern Man in Search of a Soul, 175-199, makes an interesting distinction between "two modes of artistic creation." One of these, which he calls the "psychological mode," reflects the everyday world of conscious human activities; the other, which he calls the "visionary mode," deals with an interior world which underlies the time world of surface realities, and it is frequently expressed in terms of myth. He says of the "visionary mode" that it "evokes a superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness. . . it arises from timeless depths. . .[and] it bursts asunder our human standards of value and aesthetic form." The artist who writes in this mode does not use particularized imagery because it "can never exhaust the possibilities of the vision, but falls short of it in richness of content." Finally, Jung says that the "visionary mode," which should be approached with the same seriousness as the "psychological mode," seems to embarrass literary critics.

¹⁶Paradise Lost as Myth, 51, 53, 99-101. Cf. Allen, The Harmonious Vision, 106; Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style, 212-219. Marjorie Nicolson, in "Milton and the Telescope," 80-109, relates Milton's spatial perspective to the "new feeling for distance" which the invention of the telescope brought to the world of the seventeenth century. She limits her discussion of this new perspective to Paradise Lost because she feels that the early poems "offer no evidence that Milton had pondered the new astronomy."

¹⁷"Literature as Context: Milton's Lycidas," Fables of Identity, 120.

¹⁸"A Note on Milton's Imagery and Rhythm," Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson, 184-191.

¹⁹See The Harmonious Vision, 100-104. Allen relates "the Miltonic devising of visual imagery" to "Renaissance theories of light and light symbolism." With reference to the ideas of Ficino and Kircher, he argues that light "appeared to Milton's contemporaries as a graduated divine impulsions." It exists in its pure essence as the divine radiance of God, but as it issues downwards from its source it loses its perfection and breaks up into colours and deepening shades. Because the world of Paradise Lost is still close to the divine source, it must be revealed to us "in metaphors of white splendour, in similes of motion, not in those of colour or sharp edges, the figures of a post-lapserian cosmos." Hell, the extreme limit of opacity, is described as a den of darkness because "absence from God is symbolized throughout the epic by a privation of light;" and Earth, before the Fall, is blurred (though somewhat brighter to the eye than it is now) because it is removed a step below the divine source.

²⁰Paradise Lost as Myth, 144, 95-98.

²¹"Life of Cowley," in Samuel Johnson, ed. Bronson, 471.

²²John Milton, 147.

²³"Milton II," 178.

²⁴"Milton's Verse," 47.

²⁵The Shakesperean Moment, 140.

²⁶"Keats and Milton," in Studies in Keats, 107-122.

²⁷See Praz, "Milton and Poussin," 192-210. Praz, who associates sensuousness with colour, is of the opinion that "Milton began with Venetian colours." He also says that the poet's sensuousness was occasionally expressed in the "shape of a bacchanal" (cf. Cruttwell's statement in The Shakesperean Moment, 141: "Milton's hatred of the Bacchanalian is one of the deepest, and most enduring, of his emotions"). In "Comus" he sees what he calls a "chastened sensuality." "'Comus'," he says, "is a spiritualized 'Aminta'; the satyr binds Silvia naked to a tree and tries to violate her, but Comus's fetters are the invisible work of a spell. Thus sensuality has been carried away from the senses." Praz does not find the sensuousness of the early Milton in the mature works. He feels that Milton subdued his colours in favour of a chastened and austere classicism.

²⁸An Anatomy of Milton's Verse, 7.

²⁹"Milton's Verse," 50.

³⁰Cross Currents in English Literature in the XVIIth Century, 242. Grierson's comment predates Eliot's first essay by seven years.

³¹Ikon: John Milton and the Modern Critics, 182-183. Cf. Bush, Paradise Lost in our Time, 111: "In rhythm as in other things Milton executed Paradise Lost in the grand manner because nothing less than superhuman and ritualistic grandeur would be in keeping with his characters, his vast stage and his assertion of divine order. . . yet within the limits of epic decorum he achieved a wide variety of tone and movement." Bush also makes the point that after the Fall, Adam and Eve speak in a language that is "natural, colloquial and dramatic" (ibid., 114). For more comprehensive treatments of Milton's grand style see Ann Ferry, Milton's Epic Voice and Arnold Stein, Answerable Style. Two interesting short studies of Milton's rhythms are Albert Cook, "Milton's Abstract Music," UTQ, XXIX (1959-1960), 370-385, and Donald Ramsay Roberts, "The Music of Milton," PQ, XXVI (1947), 328-344.

Cook says that "Milton carries his verse so far away from speech that one can seldom find in Paradise Lost a line where only three of the accents stand out over the other two, and never. . . a line in which one can distinguish a single major accent alone; . . . every accented word stands out when spoken as the major one in the line, pulling against the rise of the accents, equally strong, which precede and follow. This creates a kind of tension analagous to the conflict of physical forces found in the structure of a baroque dome." Roberts relates Milton's rhythms to seventeenth century music. He is prepared to say that "over and above the admittedly powerful influence of classical example there is a closer parallel and a nearer source of the Miltonic rhythm in the works of contemporary musicians."

³²A Preface to Paradise Lost, 40-41.

³³Answerable Style, 142-143. Robert Bridges, in Milton's Prosody, 61-63, gave an interesting analysis of the "descriptive rhythm" in one of the choruses from Samson Agonistes. His book was published in 1921, fifteen years before Eliot's first essay was written.

³⁴"The Music of Milton," 332.

³⁵Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader, 115.

³⁶Spaeth, Milton's Knowledge of Music, 25-26; Banks, Milton's Imagery, 133-134.

³⁷Musical Backgrounds for English Literature: 1580-1650, 163. She says that there is no music in Samson Agonistes. "Milton here reflects at last," she says, "the changing ideas of the century that discovered music to be nothing but air, nothing but physical motion." *Ibid.*, 173.

Chapter I

¹Cf. Genesis 8, 11. In Milton the dove also symbolizes the Holy Ghost. Cf. Paradise Regained, I, 30, 83, 282, and John 1, 32. In medieval and renaissance painting the olive plant was associated with the Virgin, particularly in scenes of the Annunciation.

²In classical mythology the myrtle was associated with Venus as a symbol of love.

³The "Nativity Ode" was written before his European tour. However, Milton must have become intimately acquainted with some of the great works of art of the Italian Renaissance during his visits to Venice and Florence. He seems to have been very much impressed by Florence (See "The Second Defence," 1654, and the "Familiar Letter 9, to Lucus Holstenius," 1639).

⁴Although the sun is used in the Bible as a symbol of Christ (e.g., Malachi, 4, 2) this is obviously not Milton's intention here.

⁵Shakespeare, Richard III, V, iii, 180. Cf. also Lyly, Gallathea, II, iii: "I thought there was some spirit in it because it burnt so blew. For my mother would often tell mee that when the candle burnt blew, there was some ill Spirit in the house."

⁶Sir James Frazer in The Golden Bough, 258, says that in Egypt the pig "came to be looked on as an embodiment of Set, the Egyptian devil and enemy of Osiris."

⁷See I Kings, 3, 1.

⁸Paradise Lost, XII, 191.

⁹Cf. Daniel 4, 34, and Obadiah 4, for the eagle as a symbol of pride, and I Peter 5, 8, and Psalm 91, 13, for the lion as a symbol of pride.

¹⁰Cf. Paradise Regained, III, 326. In "Il Penseroso," 134, and Paradise Regained, II, 293, brown is associated with the renunciation of worldly pleasures.

¹¹Allen, in The Harmonious Vision, 107, is of the opinion that "Satan is made visible by motion." "When we see Satan. . .in motion," he says, "we are told more about the horrible size of the red monster than all comparisons of shield and spear and island length can possibly yield."

¹²See The Bestiary, trans. T. H. White, 197-8, and George Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, 26.

¹³In Christian art (see Piero Della Francesca's "Resurrection," for example) the resurrected Christ usually wears a rose-coloured garment.

¹⁴Milton's Imagery, 100. For a different opinion on the accuracy of this simile see A. P. Stanley, Notes and Queries, Fifth Series, Vol. XI, Jan.-June, 1879. "The ascent to the convent (at Vallombrosa)," he says, "is through vast forests of chestnut trees; and inasmuch as the whole mountain is furrowed with streams, which give to the place its original name of Bellacqua, the leaves constantly falling on these streams, and almost choking their currents, give the exact picture of the 'autumnal leaves that strow the brooks'." Wordsworth, in a note on his poem "At Vallombrosa," was of the same opinion: "the natural weeds of the region of Vallombrosa are deciduous, and spread to a great extent."

¹⁵C. M. Bowra, From Virgil to Milton, 240-41. Bowra says that Bacchylides, Virgil, Dante, Tasso and Marlow used leaf imagery the same way. Cf. also Isaiah 64, 6.

¹⁶Frazer, in The Golden Bough, 347, says that "the foam of the sea is just such an object as a savage might choose to put his life in, because it occupies that sort of intermediate or nondescript position between earth and sky or sea and sky in which primitive man sees safety." Milton's Satan is, of course, a fallen archangel somewhere between sea and sky, and the benighted "Pilot" has moored by his side thinking himself perfectly safe.

¹⁷Banks, in Milton's Imagery, 153, says that a "long series of images devoted to Satan is of considerable interest in that it reveals a steady loss of dignity and power on his part."

¹⁸Pseudodoxia Epidemica, in The Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, Vol. III, 218. "The Griffin," says Browne, "doth . . . well make out the properties of a Guardian, or any person entrusted; the ears implying attention, the wings, celerity of execution, the Lion-like shape, courage and audacity, the hooked bill, reserve and tenacity. It is also an emblem of valour and magnanimity, as being compounded of the Eagle and the Lion, the noblest animals in their kinds; and so it is applicable unto Princes, Presidents, Generals and all heroick Commanders."

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 184.

²⁰The fly is a symbol of pestilence and sin, as Ferguson points out in Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, 18.

²¹Cf. Isaiah 63, 3.

²²Cf. Matthew 25, 31-46.

²³Cf. Psalm 81, 16. As a symbol of evil the bee takes its meaning from Deut. 1, 44; Psalm 118, 12; and Isaiah 7, 18.

²⁴Gertrude and James Jebes in Outer Space, 249, say that "on old zodiacs the Bull, leader of celestial hosts, indicated the year's beginning and stood for humid or passive power." For an interesting comment on another one of Milton's references to a sign of the zodiac (Paradise Lost, X, 327-9) see D. C. Allen's note in MLN, LXVIII (1953), 360. Allen says that "when the Centaur. . . is in Scorpio, the man whose star--and here Satan is a sort of comet--is at its zenith is likely to be subtle or deceitful."

²⁵For Milton's references to God as "invisible" see Paradise Lost, III, 55; V, 157; V, 599; VII, 122; and VII, 589. Christ is also referred to in these terms (VI, 681).

²⁶Painters of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance broke with this tradition. The first sign of this "heresy" was the portrayal of God's hand emerging from a cloud or a field of radiance as in Fra Filippo Lippi's "Madonna Adoring the Child with S. Bernard and Infant S. John." Later paintings--"The Garden of Eden" by Lucas Cranach, or Fra Paolino's "Annunciation," for example--showed his head or his bust; and finally, by the time of Michaelangelo, God was portrayed as a super-human being.

²⁷Cf. Exodus 24, 16, and Psalm 104, 3.

²⁸Cf. I Timothy 6, 16.

²⁹Cf. Psalm 97, 2.

³⁰Cf. Deut. 33, 2, where God gives a "fiery law" to the children of Israel with his right hand.

³¹Cf. Job 11, 20.

³²Adams, in Ikon: John Milton and the Modern Critics, 187-89, says that Milton may have used lists for a number of reasons: "he liked the sounds of words"; he wanted to relate "subordinate myths to his central myth and [include] a total body of religious truth. . . within the framework of his poem"; or they may be attributable "to a baroque aesthetic, such as delights in sportive ornamentation, far in excess and even in defiance of function strictly defined." Cf. Tillyard's comment in The Miltonic Setting, 93. "Milton's immediate business," he says, "is to give the reader the impression of great spaces of the earth and great epochs of history--to do so succinctly is quite necessary to the scheme of the poem--and he does it by using his great musical powers to get across a necessarily abbreviated enumeration. Yet for all the brevity every name or place mentioned is strictly

associated, and should be associated, with a great event in history or some place made famous by the accounts of travellers."

³³"Milton I," 163.

³⁴See "A Brief History of Moscovia" in The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson, V. 10, 339-40.

³⁵Gilbert, in MLN, XXVI (1911), 199-200, says that "'Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,' suggests military power, and 'Paquin of Sinaean Kings,' more peaceful splendour."

Chapter II

¹In his life of Milton (The Early Lives of Milton, ed. Helen Darbishire, 6), John Aubrey says: "He had a delicate tuneable Voice & had good skill: his father instructed him: he had an Organ in his house; he played on that most." Thomas Newton's comments in the biographical note annexed to his edition of Milton's Poetical Works, XXXVIII-XXXIX, are even more interesting: "after his severer studies, and after dinner. . . he used to divert and unbend his mind with music, in which he was as much a master as was his father, and he could perform both vocally and instrumentally, and it was said that he composed very well, though nothing of this kind is handed down to us."

²John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Hughes, 604.

³*Ibid.*, 604.

⁴Gretchen Finney, in her book, Musical Backgrounds for English Literature: 1580-1650, 167, says that "Milton avoided. . . any notion of complete ecstasy, for heaven is carried to the soul, not the soul to heaven."

⁵Milton's Prose Works, ed. J. A. St. John, III, 476.

⁶In Paradise Lost there is only one reference to plucked stringed instruments in connection with the fallen angels (II, 548). The organ is also associated with daemonic music at one point (I, 708), yet here the association is not direct but merely implied through metaphor.

⁷The modern conception of harmony as the relationships between chords of a key should not be confused with the way the seventeenth century used the term. In Milton's time harmony was contrapuntal or polyphonic in nature; therefore we have to think of it in terms of a number of melodic lines running side by side.

⁸The pipe is associated with the unfallen angels at only one point in Paradise Lost (VII, 595). The trumpet is in fact associated with heaven more often than hell. However, as Spaeth points out in Milton's Knowledge of Music, 36, Milton's habit is to use the trumpet "not as a part of a mixed band or orchestra, but as a signal, a sound of acclaim, or a mere noise." The only time Milton seems to treat the trumpet as "part of a mixed band or orchestra" is in his reference to "sonorous mettall blowing Martial sounds" (I, 540) when Satan's standard is raised in Hell.

⁹Milton's Prose Works, ed. J. A. St. John, III, 62.

¹⁰John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Hughes, 604.

¹¹Ibid., 51.

¹²Gretchen Finney does not think that a distinction between divine and daemonic music rests on a contrast between different musical instruments. Nor does she think it rests on the modes. In her book, Musical Backgrounds for English Literature: 1580-1650, 168, she says that differences derive "from the character and emotion of the singer."

Chapter III

¹Binyon, in "A Note on Milton's Imagery and Rhythm," 185-186, relates Milton's visual imagery to this "instinct for moving in a continuous motion." He says that continuity "will conduce to a kind of imagery corresponding to that kind of pictorial design which sweeps over details and accidents to establish large relations."

²"Milton I," 160-1.

³Ibid., 161.

⁴"Milton's Verse," 53.

⁵From Marvell's commendatory poem "On Mr. Milton's Paradise Lost" which was annexed to the second edition of the epic.

⁶Milton's Prose Works, ed. J. A. St. John, I, 255.

⁷The Early Lives of Milton, ed. Helen Darbishire, 59.

⁸See Armen Carapetyan's article, "The Concept of *Imitazione Della Natura* in the Sixteenth Century," in the Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Studies, I (1946), 47-67, for a critical appraisal of the *Nuove Musiche* and the earlier style of vocal music it supplanted.

⁹For a discussion of the influence of the *Nuove Musiche* on Milton's "Lycidas," see Finney, "A Musical Background for 'Lycidas'," 325-350.

¹⁰This is not the stand Eliot takes, of course. "It seems to me," he says, "that Milton's verse is especially refractory to yielding up its secrets to examination of the single line." Eliot, "Milton II" in On Poetry and Poets, 179.

¹¹Cf. Paradise Lost, VI, 207-12; VII, 32-7; and X, 695-700. John Aubrey, in his life of Milton, says that the poet "pronounced [the] letter R very hard." (The Early Lives of Milton, ed. Helen Darbishire, 6).

¹²Morley, A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music, ed. Harman, 290.

¹³Virgil, The Aeneid, tr. W. F. Jackson Knight (1956), p. 168.

¹⁴Morley, A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music, ed., Harman, 291.

¹⁵The titles of these poems are taken from musical terminology. Titles of some of Milton's other works show a similar interest in music. "Lycidas" is called a "monody" which was, in the sixteenth century, the common term for a vocal piece written in the style of the *Nuove Musiche*. Other titles are Tetrachordon (a scale series of half an octave) and A Mask.

¹⁶Northrop Frye, in The Return of Eden, 99, says that God speaks "in flagrant defiance of Milton's own theology, which tells us that we can know nothing about the Father except through the Son." This is quite true, and we feel that Milton might have been more successful with his treatment of Heaven had he given Christ more lines in his poem.

¹⁷Northrop Frye, in The Return of Eden, 77-78, says that when Satan tempts Eve in the guise of a serpent he "holds her attention by the fact that he can talk." Eve "does not hear a word he is saying," but in spite of this "everything he says gets past her consciousness and falls into the depths of what we should now call her subconscious." Eve's state of mind, then, becomes Satan's state of mind though she does not actually realize what is happening to her.

¹⁸Satan seems to acknowledge God's existence (683), and then when he says that there can be neither a just nor an unjust God (700-1) he denies his existence; he contradicts himself again when he says that fear can remove fear (702); and he is prepared to say that the sun and the earth produce life rather than the Gods (720-22), yet Eve is surely aware of the fact that the sun and the earth were created by God. Some of the falsifications in Satan's speech would be more apparent to the reader of Paradise Lost than to Eve. Satan says that he has "life more perfet" (689), yet the brutal fact of the matter is that he has become a snake; he says that "God cannot hurt ye and be just" (700), yet he has been condemned to eternal punishment; and when he says that Eve's eyes will be "opend and clear'd" if she disobeys God (706-8), we think of how his own eyes were dimmed when he sinned against God (II, 752-54).

¹⁹Northrop Fraye, in Anatomy of Criticism, 261, says that "the so-called broken-backed line with a spondee in the middle has since Old English times. . .been most effective for suggesting the ominous and foreboding." The fourth line of this passage is a beautiful example of what Frye is talking about.

²⁰Eliot, "Milton I," in On Poetry and Poets, 163.

²¹The Christian Doctrine, Ch. XXVII, in John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Hughes, 1012.

Conclusion

¹"Milton I," 163.

²"Milton II," 168.

³*Ibid.*, 179.

⁴George Frederic Handel (1685-1759), whose music is noteworthy for its pictorial and emotional expressiveness, composed an oratorio based on Samson Agonistes, and a secular choral work based on the companion poems "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." "The Creation," an oratorio by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), was based in part upon an adaptation of Paradise Lost. Other composers were inspired by Paradise Lost, yet their compositions--among them an oratorio by Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) and an uncompleted opera by Gasparo Spontini (1774-1851)--have failed to survive the test of time. Spontini also composed a one act opera based on the poet's life. Less ambitious works by well-known composers are L'Allegro ed il Penseroso, a cantata by C. H. Parry (1848-1918); Blest Pair of Sirens, a choral work by the same composer; Psalm 84, a choral work by Ludwig Spohr (1784-1859)

which features a solo voice; Nothing is Here for Tears, a choral work by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958); "On Time," a song by Egon Wellesz (1885-); and "Let Us With a Gladsome Mind," a hymn by Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900).

⁵"Milton II," 179.

⁶Ibid., 160. Adam's soliloquy in Book X of Paradise Lost (ll. 720-844) and Satan's soliloquy in Book IV (ll. 32-113) show "intricacies and by-paths of mental movement" because in each case the situation demands that Milton show us a tortured irresolution and uncertainty in the mind of the speaker. However, Milton's characters are usually more sure of themselves.

⁷Milton's Prose Works, ed. J. A. St. John, II, 89.

⁸Eliot, "Milton II," 179.

⁹Religio Medici, The Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, Vol. I, 88.

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